

Valour and Virtue in Preetha Rajah Kannan's Son of Shiva and The Warrior God

By

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DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that the dissertation **Valour and Virtue in Preetha Rajah Kannan's *Son of Shiva and The Warrior God*** submitted to Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (S.F), Coimbatore, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts (M.A.)**, is a dissertation carried out by me **Pavithra.T** during the period from **JANUARY 2023 – MAY 2023** under the guidance of **Dr. Aananthi Balamurugan** Assistant Professor and Hod(i)c, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (S.F), Coimbatore, and, has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or similar Titles in this University or any other University or other similar Institutions of Higher Learning.

Signature of the Candidate

CERTIFICATE

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **Valour and Virtue in Preetha Rajah Kannan's Son of Shiva and The Warrior God** submitted to Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (S.F), Coimbatore, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts (M.A.)**, is a dissertation carried out by **Pavithra.T** during the period of her study from **JANUARY 2023 – MAY 2023** in Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (S.F), Coimbatore, under the guidance of **Dr.Aananthi Balamurugan** Assistant Professor, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (S.F), Coimbatore, and, has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or similar Titles in this University or any other University or other similar Institutions of Higher Learning.

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ABSTRACT

The children's literature provides the child with the chance of responding to literature and developing personal opinions. The main focus of this work titled **Valour and Virtues in Preetha Rajah Kannan's Son of Shiva and The Warrior God** is to entertain and educate children. The **Introduction** of this study talks about the writers of children's literature and popular works of this genre, also the role of children's literature in India is discussed. The title emphasizes the concepts of bravery, morality, and goodness through the works, *Son of Shiva* and *The Warrior God* written by Preetha Rajah. The prominent ideas of these works are valour and virtue like love, affection and kindness etc.

The second chapter, **Son of Shiva, Karthikeya and His Deeds** is a gripping narrative of the god Karthikeya, commander-in-chief of the heavenly hosts, and epitome of wisdom and valour. Another popular Hindu deity called Muruga is examined, and the impeccable values and lifestyle of this god are elaborated. These stories depict the epic confrontation between good and evil, as embodied by the devas and asuras.

In the third chapter **The Warrior God, Ayyappa and His Deeds** of this study deals with the journey of the Hindu deity named Lord Ayyappa, who is mainly worshipped in south India. His brave act of killing Mahishe and venturing alone to bring tiger's milk for his step mother's illness proves his valour. Also, the prominence of the Ayyappa temple is elaborated and the significance of worshipping this deity is also emphasized. The story of Sabarimalai, where legend and history meld into one tidal wave of devotion. Discover why five crore pilgrims annually ford rivers and trick through forests and hills to pay homage to Ayyappa.

In **Conclusion**, through the contextual references from these works the high values and righteousness can be taught to the children. These stories help in inculcating the prominence of values in life that will help children to grow as morally good humans along with valour and skills.

Chapter I

Introduction

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century were the Golden Age of Literature with picture books and many stories have their roots in ancient storytellers. Before printing, there was oral Literature, and *A History from Aesop to Harry Potter* is a book that presents a history of what children have heard and read from time immemorial.

Children's literature is a collection of written works and visual assets made with young people in mind. The genre comprises well-known world literature, picture books, stories, fairy tales, lullabies, fables, folk songs, and other forms predominantly transmitted orally. It may also be fiction, poetry, or theatre written with children and young adults in mind or used by them.

All books for children, excluding comic books, joke books, cartoon books, and works not to be read from front to back, such as other content comics are a significant global phenomenon closely related to children, Literature studies have traditionally treated comics fitfully and superficially. Others argue that comics for kids should include as well since Literature studies have typically studied comics fitfully and superficially despite the relevance of comics as a global phenomenon connected to kids. or Morning Prayer and Evening the Primer in Fall, we sinned all are two passages from The New England Primer, an additional antiquated book that in 1691 and utilized in schools for a century new books in the 1740s to instruct and amuse young readers.

Thomas Boreman was one of the most well-known of these pioneers John Newbery, whose first book *Little Pretty* for enjoyment. The first modern book debuted in mid-18th century England. An expanding polite middle class and the impact of Lockean beliefs of juvenile innocence helped to create the idea of childhood. According to Professor MO

Granby Around 1740, a cluster of London publishers began to produce new books intended to instruct and amuse young writers in an article for the British Library.

Mid-18th century England saw the publication of the first modern book rise of the polite middle-class influence of Lockean notions of childhood innocence. In a piece for the British Library, Professor MO Granby claims that around the 1740s, a cluster of London publishers began to instruct and amuse young readers. Thomas Boreman was one. The most well-known of these pioneers is *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* for Children, the first book by John Newbery shape in the seventeenth century.

Central to worldview was the notion that the (human) mind is a blank slate at birth, lacking any rules for processing information. This philosophy had that empty and that it was the responsibility of the parents to fill it with good ideas. Children into a knowledge of the letters; be taught to read, without perceiving it to be anything other than a sport; and play themselves into that which others for, said Locke, emphasizing the importance of giving children pleasant books to develop their minds rather than using force to compel them. Additionally, he urged picture books may have several traits, but it is not required to do so, just as all of these traits. Some experts on literature contend that every work must be set from a perspective and feature a child as the protagonist or main character.

The Literature Association is a non-profit organization for literature, including critics, professors, students, librarians, instructors, and institutions. For our members, the literature includes all work past, present, and future written for, or adapted from, children and young adults wherever in the world.

Literature Association Conferences have been conducted around the United States, Canada, and France since the Association began sponsoring them in 1973. It refers to

literature from the end of the 18th century and earlier whose tone and approach to the subject matter are also appropriate for a youthful reading. He may read books, but he is. As a result, many adults read books Lewis Alice in Wonderland and A.A. Winnie the Pooh Story of literature is also in literature.

It is important to remember that the imagination comes first. It has a wide readership and effectively includes older people in its target demographic. The fact that books for adults are routinely read aloud, purchased, appraised, and chosen for publication suggests that adults make up a segment of the population. They might also seem to with adults in mind, as in the case of the well-known French historical parody comic book series *Astérix*. But generally speaking, literature is a sovereign republic. But generally speaking, literature is a sovereign republic that might as an aesthetic experience, a reconstruction of previous experiences, an extension of, or the development of experiences.

The Golden Age of literature is often referred to as the period between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century since so many classics for children during this time. Traditional tales like *Fairy Tales* can be the origin of literature, albeit as such until the eighteenth century. Originated in the City of Urak in southern Mesopotamia in Sumer 3200 and thrived in Egypt. The book *A Token for Children* by James Janeway, which has the subtitle "An Exact Account of the," was published in 1671–1702. The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes (1765), his most well-known piece, was the first children's book.

A Little Book for the Little Children is one of several books for half of the 18th-century rhymes puzzles will enjoy and learn from works like *A Description of Three Hundred Animals* (1730), whose second section was produced especially for their

enjoyment the consequence was a quick spread of literature in the second half of the 18th century, which led to a blossoming book industry by the beginning of the 18th century the first time, authors could support themselves completely via writing for children terms of both history and scope, Indian literature is a relatively recent field.

Indian children have always been on a diet of mythological tales of vengeance to make them suitable for young listeners. The Panchatantra were among the other favourites. All of them shared the same moral message, which was powerful and carried by them all. One of the first books was called Chandamama. Long-running and available in numerous Indian languages, it was a monthly magazine. Chakrapani and well-known Telugu film director B.Nagi Reddy founded the magazines. The Ambulimama version debuted in 1947 in Tamil and Telugu. Before starting its English-language publications in 1955, the journals were in Marathi, Malayalam, and Gujarati.

Chandamama quickly charmed kids throughout India in twelve different Indian languages. The journal featured articles with messages intended to, and it frequently employed the third person to tell tales about avaricious kings and ignorant men and women. The, which enjoyed enormous popularity, continued until 2013. Cartoonist Keshav Shankar Pillai, also known as Shankar, founded the Book Trust. CBT released numerous books by Shankar.

Nobody should feel embarrassed to call literature didactic literature to better our children, instil noble values, and tenderly shape them into men and women of character. India. India and outside (74) publishing books after independence, the Book Trust (CBT) took the lead in the 1950s, followed by the National Book Trust (NBT) in the 1970s, IBH, and Thompson Press as the other early entries.

Roald Dalal between his 21 novels and the numerous ways his work has, Roald's tales are incredibly well-known and adored by my generation and everyone who has come after us. I can understand how these are some of the best stories to pique the interest of hesitant readers into space in a glass lift or defeating a villain as horrible as Miss Trunchbull still makes me utterly giddy and imaginative, surprising endings. Children and adults alike like Roald's books.

David Edward Walliams OBE, better known by his stage name David Walliams, was born in England on 20, 1971. He is an English comedian, actor, author, writer, and television personality. His work with Matt Lucas on the BBC sketch comedy series *Little Britain* (2003–2006) and *Fly with Me* (2010–2011) made him most well-known. Walliams served as a judge on the ITV talent competition show *Got* from 2012 to 2022. He also writes novels, of which 37 million copies worldwide.

C.S. Lewis Clive Staples Lewis was an Irish scholar, novelist, and author of about 40 books on Christian apologetics, including *The Screwtape Letters* and *Mere Christianity*. He was born in Belfast, Ireland (now in Northern Ireland) on November 29, 1898, and passed away in Oxford, Oxfordshire, England, on November 22, 1963.

Grace Lin

Over 20 books, including picture books, readers, and novels, have been written and illustrated by Grace Lin. Her works cover topics from growing up as an Asian American in white towns to traditional dishes like the dim and moon cakes to fantasy tales based on Chinese folklore. She writes from a Taiwanese American perspective.

Author of books Katrina Elizabeth DiCamillo was born in the United States on March 25, 1964. *Because of Winn-Dixie*, *The Tiger Rising*, *The Tale of Despereaux*, *The*

Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane, The Elephant, the Mercy Watson series, and Flora & Ulysses are just a few of the more than 25 novels she has written. There have been almost 37 million sales of her books. Two have been transformed into musical sets, while four have been into films. Her writings have received numerous honours; DiCamillo is one of only six authors who earned two Newbery Medals for *The Tale of Despereaux* and *Flora & Ulysses*. She was born in Philadelphia.

She was born in Philadelphia. Before relocating to Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1994, she spent several years in Clermont performing entry-level jobs after earning an English degree from the University of Florida, Gainesville. DiCamillo attempted to publish a book while working at a book warehouse in Minnesota. Because of Winn-Dixie, her first book for publication was well-received both critically and commercially. Then DiCamillo quit her job to devote herself to writing full-time.

At 89, Eric Carle new works have written and illustrated well over 50 books for children. His unique illustration approach incorporates collages made from hand-painted sheets. As a result, characters appear animated and happy-colours visuals. He has been a beloved and best-selling author of picture books for the past six decades to the combination of these well-loved characters and straightforward language that is frequently simple enough for young children to memorize.

These emphasize emotional, romantic themes like her 40 works. *The One I Knew Best of All*, a narrative of her early years, was published in 1893. She spent her time in England starting in the mid-1890s, but in 1909 she built a home in Plandome, Long Island, New York, where she passed away in 1924. *The Romantic Lady*, a biography of her by her son Vivian Burnett, the inspiration for *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, was published in 1927.

Since 1995, award-winning young adult novels by Christopher Paul Curtis have been. His hometown of Flint, Michigan, appears frequently in his writings. But what make his writings so popular and widely read are his characters. His characters are incredible thanks to his understanding of minds, personalities, and family relationships, even as significant historical occurrences like the Birmingham Church Bombing of 1963 or the Underground Railroad in the background of his novel.

She started composing songs for television, but since the lyrics to one of her songs, *A Squash, and a Squeeze*, were turned into a book in 1993, she has focused more on writing books 184 published works in bookstores. The remaining 120 are meant for educational purposes and feature her *Songbirds* phonic reading program, a component of the *Oxford Reading Tree* published by Oxford University Press.

JM Barrie

In Children's literature, JM Barrie (James Matthew Barrie) is another instantly familiar name because of his most well-known work, Peter's 1902 novel *Little White Bird* introduced the character of the kid who never grew up, and along with Wendy, Tinker bell, and the lost boys, *Peter tale* won the hearts of adults and children for many generations movie *Peter Pan* and the 2004 movie *Finding Never land* reflect well-known figure and childhood, respectively. *Peter Pan* is still performed on stage and in pantomimes.

John Robert McCloskey

Robert McCloskey (September 15, 1914– June 30, 2003) was an American writer and illustrator of books. He wrote and illustrated eight picture books and won two Caldecott

Medals from the American Library Association for the best-illustrated picture book in Maine: *Blueberries for Sal*, *One Morning in Maine*, *Time of Wonder*, and *Burt Dow*, *Deep-water Man* (the last three of those four were all set on the coast). His best-known work is *Make Way for Ducklings*, set in Boston. In longer works, he both wrote and illustrated Homer Price he illustrated Keith Henry Reed series.

Rudyard Kipling

Rudyard Kipling, in Joseph Rudyard Kipling, (born December 30, 1865, in now Mumbai, died January 18, 1936, in London, England), English short-story writer, poet, and novelist chiefly remembered for his celebration of British imperialism, his tales and poems of British soldiers in India, and his tales for children. He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907. Father, John Lockwood Kipling, was an artist and scholar who had considerable influence on his work, became curator of the Lahore Museum, and is described as presiding over house first chapter of his most famous novel. His mother was Alice Macdonald.

Michael Rosen

Rosen was born on May 7, 1946, in Harrow, Middlesex, England parents were teachers who began to read and write poetry at a young age was also part of an acting club, where he learned how to act and direct plays to medical school for a short time, he decided to earn an English degree, so he transferred to the University of Oxford his first play, *Backbone*, while at Oxford at the Royal Court Theatre in London in 1969.

Michael Rosen is an English author who has written picture books and nonfiction and served as the United Laureate from 2007 to 2009 (1974) by Quentin Blake, who also illustrated Roald books. Some of his other poetry collections are *You Wait Till Older*

Than You (1996) and *Bananas in My Ears* (2011). Many of his poems are about his life between the ages of 2 and 12.

Rosen also wrote many picture books, which often around animals. Some of these titles include *Rover* (1999), *Howler* (2004), and *Bear Flies High* (2009). He has written some books about events from his life. One memoir is *This Is Not My Nose: Memoir of Illness and Recovery* Rosen is a popular speaker. He often performs parts of his books in schools and on television.

Dorothy Canfield Fisher

Canfield received a Ph.D. in Romance languages from Columbia University in 1904, a rare accomplishment for a woman of her generation. In 1907 she married John Redwood Fisher and, under the pen name Dorothy Canfield, published her first novel inherited her farm in Arlington, Vermont; the town appears (often with the skimpiest of literary veils) in many of her works, including *Hillsboro People* (1915), written with poet Sarah.

Steven Kellogg

Kellogg was born on October 26, 1941, in Norwalk, Connecticut. As a child, he frequently entertained his younger sisters by making up stories and drawing accompanying pictures. His love for animals led him to cover the walls of his room with sketches of them and to take an after-school job at a dog kennel. Kellogg received a scholarship to the Rhode Island School of Design and majored in illustration. A fellowship enabled him to study in Italy during his senior. After receiving his degree in 1963, Kellogg took graduate classes and later taught at married Helen Hill in 1967 and raised six stepchildren.

Kellogg debuted as an illustrator of books by providing pictures for George Funny *Hair ticklers* (1967). He went on to illustrate the texts of numerous authors, including Hillarie Belloc (*Matilda Who Told Lies and to*, 1970), Margaret Mahy (*The Boy Who Home*, 1975; *The Green Bath*, 2013), Trinka Hakes Noble (*The Day Boa Ate Wash*, 1980), Jane Bayer (*A, My Name is Alice*, 1984), Deborah Guarino (*Is Your Mama a Llama?*, 1989), Suzanne Williams (*Library Lil*, 1997), Dennis Haseley (*The Invisible Moose*, 2006), and B.J. Ward (*Forty Marty*, 2013).

Kellogg received the 1976 Christopher Award for *How the Witch Got Alf* 1975, written by Cora Annett. *How Much Is a Million?* (1985), written by David M. Schwartz, was chosen as a Boston Book Award Honor Book in the illustration category. Kellogg also illustrated *If You Made a Million* (1989) and *Millions to Measure* (2002) *Faith If You Decide to Go to the Moon* (2005), which Kellogg illustrated, was chosen as a Boston Book winner in the nonfiction category.

Kevin Henkes

Kevin Henkes is an American book author and illustrator. His books have won many awards, including the Caldecott Medal for *First Full Moon* (2004). Henkes was born on November 27, 1960, in Racine, Wisconsin. He decided he wanted to write and illustrate books when he was in high school. He was successful. *All Alone* (1981), his first book, was soon published. Henkes became known for his stories about a group of mice. The first mouse story was *A Weekend with Wendell* (1986) cast of mouse characters that later appeared in *Julius, the Baby of the World* (1990), (1988), and others. *Purple Plastic Purse* (1996) is one of the mouse titles. Another, *Owen* (1993), was a Caldecott Honor Book.

Stolen Words – Melanie Florence

A young girl asks her grandfather to teach her his language course in this lovely picture book from 201 describes in heartbreaking detail how it was taken from him when he was a child and sent to a residential away from his Native Family small girl assists her grandfather in telling his narrative, both English and Cree in the book depicts the ongoing suffering caused by violence against indigenous people alongside their ongoing resilience of the most heartfelt books gives a lovely and moving.

The Wind in the Willows- Kenneth Grahame

Although it has global fame as *Adventures in Wonderland*, an eccentric masterpiece is available in dozens of other languages. It can be in Afrikaans as *Die Wind in Die Wilgers*, Italian as *Il Vento nei Salici*, Finnish as *Kaislikossa suhisee*, Portuguese as *Aventuras de Senhor Sapo*, and many more. There are currently well over 50 English editions of it available.

There are verse translations, level readers for ESL students, audio and video adaptations, plays (particularly by A.A. Milne and Alan Bennett), films, picture books (with or without stickers), pop-up books, knitting patterns, graphic novels, and scholarly annotated editions. There are more successors, including *Robert de Counselling for Toads* (1998), an introduction to psychotherapy, gospel meditations, William *The Willows in Winter* (1993), and a cooking book.

After being serialized in (*The American Magazine*), the book *The Secret Garden* by American author Frances Hodgson Burnett in 1911. One of the pastoral tales of self-has. Frances Hodgson Burnett, formerly Frances Eliza Hodgson (born November 24, 1849, in Manchester; died October 29, 1924, in Plandome, New York), was an American author. After her father passed away in 1854, circumstances became progressively more difficult

as she grew older. The family left Europe in 1865 and relocated to New Market, Tennessee, close to Knoxville.

Blended a plot with the most romantic and unlikely turns with a remarkable skill for realistic detail images of working-class life uncommon at the time. Burnett penned the books (*1879*), *Louisiana (1880)*, *A Fair Barbarian (1881)*, and *Through One Administration (1883)* after relocating to Washington, she also co-wrote the play *Esmeralda (1881)* with actor-playwright William Gillette.

Little Lord Fauntleroy was written with children in mind and was initially serialized in *St. Nicholas* magazine, although moms were the audience it appealed to the most. It established the long curls of the main character, model by those of her son Vivian, and the velvet suit with the lace collar, after outfit, as a model for young boys. Who generally detested it?

She prevailed in an English court case in 1888 regarding the dramatic rights of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, setting a standard in British copyright law in 1911. Her later works for children include *Sara Crewe (1888)*, *The Little Princess (1905)*, and *The Secret Garden (1909)*. *The Lady of Quality (1896)*, one of her other plays, is often regarded as her best work.

These emphasize emotional, romantic themes like those of her 40 works. *The One I Knew Best of All*, a narrative of her early years, was published in 1893. She spent her time in England starting in the mid-1890s, but in 1909 she built a home in Plandome, Long Island, New York, where she passed away in 1924. *The Romantic Lady*, a biography of her by her son Vivian Burnett, the inspiration for *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, was published in 1927.

Arnold Stark Lobel was an American author of books, including the *Frog and Toad* series and *Mouse Soup*. He wrote and illustrated the picture books *Fables*, a 1981 Caldecott Medal winner for best-illustrated picture book. Arnold Lobel. Arnold Lobel once said I think of any work that could be more agreeable and fun than making books for publication in 1927.

The *Autobiography of a Horse* is a book and the first significant animal tale in literature. It was in 1877, just before passing, kindness, sympathy, and an understanding treatment of horses. During the time before automobiles, the story by *Black Beauty*, a lovely well-bred horse. After being overworked and mistreated, he eventually passes out and is sold to another caring owner, where he recovers. An ideal horse would be Beauty, who is obedient, willing, bright, and brave. The work has more realism thanks to meticulous observation and in-depth descriptions of equine conduct.

A picture book titled *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See* was released in 1967 by Henry Holt and Company. The book has received a lot of positive feedback from parents and educators on several honour rolls to a mix-up between the authors of the books the author of *Ethical Marxism: The Categorical Imperative of Liberation* (Creative Marxism), philosopher Bill Martin, the book was momentarily banned from the third-grade curriculum in 2010.

Goodnight Moon is an American book written by Margaret Wise Brown and illustrated by *Clement Hurd* was published in 1947, and is a highly World. The three books that have been as a collection titled *Over the Moon Goodnight Moon* had poor initial sales: only 6,000 copies upon initial release in the fall of 1947. Anne Carroll

Moore, the influential librarian at the New York Public Library (NYPL), regarded it as overly sentimental. The NYPL and other libraries did not acquire it at first. War II Baby Boom year slowly became a bestseller.

This stunningly beautiful bestseller won the 2021 Caldecott Award for the most distinguished picture book of gorgeous artwork in this poetic and ecological message about water preservation. After learning about the powerful connections between the land we live on and its Indigenous cultures, to make their pledges to protect water. Parents can create artwork (and relax after a day of child-wrangling) with one of these adult coloring books.

In one of the most popular classic books, a caterpillar eats its way through a worth of food before into a butterfly. With colourful artwork made with tissue paper and paint, plus fun holes to stick tiny fingers through, the book goes a long way toward instilling a love of reading in kids. The story touches on everything from counting the days of the week to the life cycle of living things. Continually selected as one of the best baby books ever written, it has sold 41 million copies worldwide since 1969.

With striking illustrations that depict Black women of history, this board book will capture the interest of a baby or toddler. *Dream Big, Little One*, published in 2018, features encouraging pioneers, including Bessie Coleman, who flew her airplane high. Children to real heroes in a format love. Older fans of real-life stories will want to check out the best biographies ever written.

The list (or personal collection) of books is complete. This interactive book, released in 2010, teaches young children how to turn an or any error into a lovely piece of art.

Observe how a stain changes into a crumpled paper and turns into a horse for young children helpful reminder for works of art.

Then look at these adorable and humorous errors of young children and a helpful reminder for works of art. Then look at these and child errors. Kids will find themselves mesmerized by the gorgeous illustrations and poetic beauty of this in 2020. *I Talk Like a River* is an inspiring story about a. This is the perfect book for young readers who deserve to find their voice and learn that communication comes in many forms, many of which are beautiful.

Zulay is a happy, energetic first-grader who loves to hang out with her friends. She also happens to be blind. This story focuses on inclusion in the way it presents special needs as simply a part of life, not unlike challenges that anyone might face. The class holds a field day, and Zulay wants to race, so she does. The back cover of this 2015 hard cover features a Braille alphabet.

Welsch is an aspiring writer who lives in New York's Upper East Side. Encouraged by her nanny Harriet observes others and writes her thoughts and practices for her future career. Several standalone episodes highlight the eccentric characters she meets on her afternoon route friends are Simon Sport Rocque, a serious boy who wants to be a certified public accountant or a ball player, and Janie Gibbs, who wants her mother and father to be at a loss to understand feelings and are of little comfort to her.

Love You Forever is a 1986 picture book written by Robert Munsch and illustrated by Sheila McGraw. The story centers on a mother who sings a lullaby to her son at each stage of his life. During his childhood, she becomes frustrated with his rebellious nature, yet always sings to him after he falls asleep. *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown -

Age 2 and up. *Love You Forever* by Robert Munsch. *On the Night You Were Born* by Nancy Tillman

The Little Prince (French: *Le Petit Prince*, pronounced is a novella written and illustrated by French aristocrat, writer, and military pilot Antoine de Saint-Exupery. It was first published in English and French in the United States by Reynal & Hitchcock in April 1943 and was published posthumously in France following liberation. The story follows a young prince who visits various planets, including Earth and address themes of loneliness, friendship, love, and loss. Despite its style as a book, *The Little Prince* lives, adults, and human nature.

Anne of Green Gables is a 1908 novel by Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery (published as L. M. Montgomery all ages, it has a classic since the mid-20th century orphan girl Anne Shirley sent by mistake to two middle-aged siblings, Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert, who had intended to adopt a boy to help them on their farm in the fictional town of Avonlea in Prince Edward Island, Canada novel recounts how Anne makes way through life.

Since its publication, *Anne of Green Gables* has been translated into at least 36 languages and has sold more than 50 million copies, making it one of the best-selling books worldwide was the first of many novels; Montgomery wrote numerous sequels, and since her death, another sequel published, as well as prequel titled *Before Green Gables*. This prequel was written in 2008 by Budge Wilson to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the book.

The Tale of Peter Rabbit is a book written and illustrated by Beatrix Potter that follows the mischievous and disobedient young Peter Rabbit as he gets to the garden and returns home to his mother, who puts him to bed after offering him chamomile tea tale written for five-year-old Noel Moore, the son of the former governess, Annie Carter Moore, in 1893 and privately printed by Potter in 1901 after several rejections but was in a trade edition by Frederick Warne & Co in 1902. The book was a success, and multiple reprints were issued in the years immediately following its debut has been translated into 36 and 45 million copies and is one of the best-selling books in history release book has generated considerable merchandise for both children and adults, including toys, dishes, food, clothing, and videos.

Potter was one of the first to be responsible for such merchandise when she patented a Peter Rabbit doll in 1903 and followed it almost immediately with a Peter Rabbit board game that has remained popular amongst children 0for a century and continues to into new book editions, television programs, and films.

The Hobbit, or There and Back Again, is a fantasy book written by English author J. R. R. Tolkien in 1937 to a great deal of critical acclaim; it was nominated for the Carnegie Medal and won the New York Herald Tribune award for best juvenile fiction. The Hobbit is now the subject of a trilogy of epic high fantasy adventure films directed by Peter Jackson and released in 2012 under the title *An Unexpected Journey*. *The Desolation of Smaug* (2013) *The Battle of the Five Armies* (2014). The films on the 1937 novel The Hobbit by J. R. R. Tolkien, with large portions of the trilogy inspired by the appendices to The Return of the King, expand on the story told in The Hobbit as new material and characters written for the films. Together they act as a prequel to The Lord of the Rings film trilogy.

The films take place in the fictional world of Middle-earth sixty years before the beginning of the Lord of the Rings, and follow hobbit Bilbo Baggins (Martin Freeman), who is convinced by the wizard Gandalf the Grey (Ian McKellen) to accompany thirteen led by Thorin Oaken shield (Richard Armitage), on a quest to reclaim the Lonely Mountain from the dragon Smaug (Benedict Cumberbatch). Preetha Rajah Kannan is the earliest collection of Ponniyin Selvan of the Five Hardbound Volumes tail in the Book collection stepped into the courtyard of Big Temple for the first drew my eyes like a magnet and lifted my head towards the evening Sun splashed sky immense Lingam in the sanctum.

The films take place in the fictional world of Middle-earth sixty years before the beginning of The Lord of the follow Bilbo Baggins (Martin Freeman), who)the wizard Gandalf the Grey (Ian McKelle accompanies thirteen led by Thorin Oaken shield (Richard Armitage), on a quest to reclaim the Lonely Mountain from the dragon Smaug (Benedict Cumberbatch) Rajah Kannan is the author of an enthralling collection of stories based on the revered Thiruvilayaadal Puranam.

Her third book, Hounds of Shiva, is a treasure house of tales detailing the heroic acts of sacrifice, devotion, and service in the life and times of the Saivite saints first book in December last is due for is a work in progress, Preetha Rajah Kannan does not relish playing an active part in book promotion.

But then her Mumbai-based publisher, the JAICO Publishing House, just informed her that with the sales of her Maiden Book to translate into Tamil fact shared by the JAICO stall representative during the 11th annual book fair in Madurai last month was that more copies of her books by youths aged between 18 and 25 years.

Children are interested in traditional tales like those from the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, Bagavath Geethai, and the Panchatantra aware that will encourage positive thinking narrative include a moral then, and without assistance from anybody else, will the kids deal with their issues.

In every piece of literature, there will be some moral in the story school teachers should read the books and tell the children the moral of the stories should read the stories for their kids and advice to be independent in their work. The teacher should Children should be between the age of 3 to 17 will be high after they are dependent on their life children will solve their problems on their own they will find solutions for there they will discuss with their parents tell their ideas to solve teachers can tell whether their ideas will work out or not should give confidence to the children.

Sometimes teachers and parents may become upset because some kids understand the narrative or its lesson are young children and parents and should speak to the youngsters more gently and attentively.

On the other hand, one can read some disturbing articles about similar injustices against Christians in India on the Internet historical figure named Ayyappan from Kerala may have displayed a more or less Christian personality, leading someone to believe that Jesus could have been his incarnation if this were, it would be the other way around since he lived after Jesus Christian circles, this, and tragically, there is even an anti-Ayyappan movement today among Keralan Christians.

Hinduism has a few origin myths that are somewhat unique trinity (trim) of Brahma(n), Vishnu, Iva fundamental idea is the creator, Viju upholds the creation, Iva founded, and at last, after it has served its function, Iva will destroy it allow beings of the light to gain knowledge through their exile-related experiences (cf. below), for example,

creator, Brahman (neuter), is self-born and eternal in his ultimate but formless state manifests as Brahm (male) in his created (saga), which has attributes.

Brahm, the manifested Brahman who appears with Viu and Iva, is the one who does it, who causes it all to come to be, to appear, and to exist out of this energy literature is a variety of descriptions of how this happens are consorts for these deities Lakm is the wives of Brahm, Viu, and Iva, respectively names for these deities exist, denoting either various incarnations or various traditions and aspects of them.

The fact that a high entity was born in that trinity under unique circumstances is assumed the form of Mohini was embraced by Iva when he was fascinated by her beauty, which is how Dharma has created origins of this are the subject of numerous stories to one account, they had, as she lacked a womb, was born between them.

Another believes that semen dropped to the ground and emerged after a violent coupling with homosexuals are unable to have children to be resistant to seeing this as a homosexual act interpretation attempts that this was a homosexual act and, who abandoned the child in humiliation, an asura with a head, once resided in the area that is now home to Mysore terrorized the populace, and they prayed for his deliverance.

Then the goddess, who was, arrived and killed his wife, Mahiasura or Mahi, who some sources refer to as his sister, and managed to obtain a blessing from the gods prohibiting her from being killed as well, save by someone descended from Viu and Iva (obviously such a boon must have some exemption that is frequently nearly impossible) allowing to kill Mahi as term killing has a different meaning in this context than it does in the human world reality, it refers to releasing someone from a physical.

Trapping in an incarnation allows the spirit or entity thus incarnated to leave it and proceed without it, as was the case with Mahi, who was relieved to free a strict sense,

murdering someone in a method has the same result as releasing a soul from the body problem is that humans have no concept what this entails and are not capable of killing with divine purpose therefore, killing is always considered a serious crime by humans, a curse had caused Mahi to change into a human with head kill her; instead, he freed her from the curs There are times when things appear differently in the heavenly and spiritual realms.

Ayyappa, to whom a well-known temple on the Sabarimalai Mountain is devoted, is thought to have taken on the form of Dharmasasta millennia later in Kerala manifestation of Ayyappa have taken place no earlier than the 8th century CE does not seem very persuasive that he would be an incarnation of Dharmasasta, given that he had a Muslim buddy named Vavar. Therefore, it is not a good idea to attribute the killing of Mahi to Ayyappa personally Dharmasāstā killing must have occurred during the Mahabharata era when Dharmasāstā manifested as Maikaan or perhaps Bhtantha assuming the appearance of Maikaan or Bhtantha also known as Rama with the Axe, is credited with building the temple for Ayyappan on the Sabarimalai Mountain.

Since he dates back to the Mahabharata era and has a long history of trade was likely for Dharmasasta because of this folklore, Ayyappa is an incarnation of Dharmasasta, which is why people tend to associate it with him might not have been the same person as him, but rather a spiritually advanced in or teacher who to Dharma folktales may have been little overblown, but he will have performed numerous good deeds (reportedly even a few miracles).

The folk stories may have been a little overblown as they do not frequently to recent information from Kerala are plans to rename the temple to honour Dharmasastra notion that Ayyappan might be a Jesus incarnation has gained traction in our day and age

believe that the statement in the previous paragraph raises some questions about this hypothesis Thomas Christians are a Christian society that has reportedly existed in Kerala since 52 CE, which is extraordinary.

According to legend, Thomas, an apostle, visited and established this colony and instructed to do it in India during the missing years between the ages of 12 and 30, a historical gap in the New and has been the subject of extensive debate and written exploration Church and Christian theologians, as might be expected, reject the notion and assert that there are other indications about how he would have spent these years, such as the possibility that he had simply been working somewhere as a carpenter case would hardly have had anything highly spiritual about him (and would most likely have married) Why, oh why, why on travels the world instead is no logical basis for doing anything else could have sought knowledge and experience outside of the area in which was born peoples on this globe would have benefited from his teachings all, he was a fellow human.

Absolutely no logical justification exists for doing otherwise could have very well sought knowledge and experience outside of the region in which he was born on this planet and would have benefited from his teachings only reason for rejecting this theory is things that, according to contemporary theology, are incompatible with what they consider impossible or that Eastern influences may be present.

Once a Jesuit retreat close to Calcutta (modern-day Kolkata went to their library, I found a book about the development of Christianity in India that stated that the Thomas Christians had numerous texts, all of which had by the Church What a Thomas had visited Kerala before familiar with its inhabitants have no trouble imagining that Jesus sent him there is another strange tale portion of Kerala by a monarch named Rajasekara,

who had no son to succeed him as he once heard a child weeping while taking a break by the Pamba River Brahmi encouraged him to take the child home as he was debating what to do with it.

When they turned 12 years old, he would learn all about Glory Tale suggests that Ayyappa had a divine origin, which could support theories that he is related to Jesus that Ayyappa will have been. A somewhat startling parallelism exists in that Jesus had his spiritual still the only theory could be one of several likely causes for why the Church burned the writings be that the remnants of that branch of Christianity in Kerala had an Ayyappa because of these influences, some people thought he was Jesus in human form.

In Kerala, God Ayyappa celebrates a festival every year on Sabarimalai means the mountain of Shaber tribes born in be shared cultural heritage of Jewish traders in the Mediterranean and ancient India and also gives greater significance to the word Israel in the Jewish Bible to the Yakub, the father of Yusuf, was the name Israel (which means wrestler received his battles with Ayyappa and had to engage in similar combat with Vavar Kerala Ayyappa celebrates a festival every year on Sabarimalai.

According to the Bible, Yakub, the father of Yusuf, was given the name Israel(which means wrestler), and he received his battles and had to engage in similar combat with Vavar. Ayyappa of Sabarimalai seems to be a constant tug of war between the Asuras and Devas to rule over the three worlds, namely Swarga, Dharti, and Patalaloka storyline characterizes Indian Mythology aptly- sages worshipping the Gods with the offering, tapas. –proof way of extracting boons from Trimurti, intercourse with animals resulting in springs, curses uttered in wrathful anger that comes true, and the eternal fight between Good and Evil.

The book takes you through one failing asura after another in subduing the treacherous schemes of loopholes in the wish's constant favours chapter feels like a short story narrating an incident leading to the birth of The Warrior God, Ayyappa, and his story long and meandering storyline leading to Ayyappa is somewhat exhausting and feels drawn out despite the way with words child of Shiva and Vishnu is to defeat the buffalo asura princess comes across his nemesis Mahishi and her in a fuel—a raged battle the cosmos.

Mahishi, the buffalo-headed asura princess, wreaks vengeance on the devas for killing her subjugates and unleashes a reign of terror on the three worlds. The asura and the boy stood motionless, locking eyes. He emerged from the jungle onto the banks of the Azhutha. There before him stood a she-buffalo Mahishi Ayyappa who to kill her- buffalo is the Asura Princess Leelavathi. And she re-birth Asura Princes in that her name was the daughter of Karambhasura. Ayyappa, also known as Aiyandar, Sastha, and Hariharaputra, today the focus of a tradition, emerged from the fusion of a Dravidian god of tribal provenance with the Puranic story of interaction with Vishnu For the story from the Bhagvata Purana, see 69 worthies about the story is that Shiva is not in the way the demons are.

Shiva asks Vishnu to assume the Mohini form for his viewing pleasure, his delight, as one text puts it, and Vishnu acquiesces to no external pressure their own volition remarks any contradiction, the devotee sees in Shiva the realization of all possibilities the Ayyappa legend, Vishnu becomes pregnant from intercourse with and produces a child. , Vishnu drops the baby to earth, where it is found and adopted by the Pandyan Rajasekhara of Pantalarn account of the birth in the three Puranic narratives medieval legends invents it and refers to the child as one jata (born of a not-vagina) term alone is

the same term used in texts like the Manusmriti and the Arthashastra to refer to nonvaginal of all kinds.

The child grows up to become a renowned warrior some versions, he destroys a demon and army and fights the bandit chieftains ravaging the countryside of them is the Muslim pirate Vavar. Overcome in battle, Vavar becomes a close friend of Ayyappa and joins forces with him would appear that this story unites the local cult of a deified warrior chieftain with the Puranic account of Hariharaputra. Father represents the reconciliation of Vaishnavites Shaivites had often come into conflict in the South with the immense powers of the preserver and the destroyer gods, which he embodies to protect.

The Ayyappa tradition incorporates Vavar as the inseparable companion of the god, thus symboling also a Hindu-Muslim rapprochement main Ayyappa temple at Sabarimalai, believed to have been constructed by foster father on instructions before the latter ascended to heaven, has a shrine for Vavar to be descendants perhaps commemorates the fact that Arab traders had come to the Malabar coast in search of pepper and other spices Ayyappa temples elsewhere duplicate this pattern is represented in his shrine not by an image but by a sword.

Vavar is a Robin Hood figure in the legend Vavar distributed the portion of his plundered goods among his follower people had followers Ayyappa, both protector figures, to one another is also part of the ritual are several songs in his praise, dance dramas performed by devotees before they set out on a dance performed by two men, representing Ayyappa and Vavar. One carries a knife other a sickle is said to have instructed his foster father to build the shrine for Vavar, saying Consider Vavar.

This phrasing recalls many statements that AI juna is inseparable from himself Ayyappa Sewa Sangam, established about three decades ago to help the pilgrims, which

has developed into an with 600 branches and conducts many activities, including maintenance of forty temples, holding conventions, working for Harijan welfare, running religious classes, and producing literature and music cassettes, claims that Vavar wanted to become a Hindu but Ayyappa told him not to.

Sabarimalai – a South Indian all-male pilgrimage to Ayyappan, a hyper-male deity born from two male gods – plays a role in constructing male, both external (social-structural) and internal (psychological) levels pilgrimage draws creatively on relationships between two South Asian male figures: renounce and householder, breaking down the opposition between transcendence and immanence to bring into everyday life a sense of specific to men.

Ayyappan as specifically masculine forms of spiritual, moral, and bodily while acting as signifiers of superior purity and male responsibilities towards merges individual men with the hyper-masculine deity and a community of men: other male pilgrims, senior male gurus are both social and personal universal sense of masculine ambivalence self-doubt has a specific local-cultural resolution when boys and men experience strengthening of the gendered ego through renunciatory self-immersion in a greater masculine.

The ostensibly egalitarian devotional community is hierarchical: pilgrims surrender themselves to deity and guru, and friendship between men can and performed because it upon a sense of difference and hierarchy gender with the woman as the absent and interiorized other segregated celebrations of masculinity work both towards reproduction through processes of remasculinization and in the limiting of masculinity to males.

Lord Ayyappa The Pandya dynasty, by Thirumala Naicker of the Pandya Empire, Madurai, Thiruvaneli in places such as Valliyur, Tenkasi, Shengottah, and Sivagiri. Lord

Ayyappa was the son of Vishnu & Shiva Ayyappa is a very popular Hindu deity in South India as Ayyappa was born out of the union between Lord Shiva and the mythical Mohini, who is also an avatar of Hariharan Puthiran means the son of both Hari or Vishnu and Haran or Shiva.

As legendary, when Shiva and Mohini abandoned the child on the banks of the Pampa River, the ruler of that dynasty, King Rajashekara, the childless monarch belonging to Pandalam, adopted Ayyappa and accepted him as the divine gift.

The Deification of Lord Ayyappa understood the nature against his son and begged forgiveness left for the heavenly abode after telling them to build a large temple at Sabari so that the memories remain forever on the earth temple Lord Parshuram sculpted the figure of Lord Ayyappa on the eve of Makar Sankranti in this way Ayyappa was defined.

King Rajasekara built the eighteen stairs leading to the temple complex and was in a dilemma about placing an idol in the temple for darshan the words of the Lord known as Ganga, Sabarimalai as holy as Kasi – Dharmasastha sent Parshuram, who made the land of Kerala holy from the bottom of the ocean to the Sabarimalai was he who carved the figure of Lord Ayyappa.

Apart from the above, the devotees have to bathe in the holy adorn themselves with three-eyed coconut and Samantha garland and then should bravely steep climb 18 stairs of Sabarimalai temple of Sabarimalai in Kerala is the most famous Ayyappa shrine, and is visited by over 50 million devotees every year is one of the most famous pilgrimages in the worlds from around the country visit this place to get the blessings of Lord Ayyappa.

Ayyappan is a warrior deity with ascetic devotion to Dharma – the ethical way of living to deploy his military genius and daring yogic war abilities to destroy those who are powerful but unethical, abusive and arbitrary most-public aspect of the worship of

Ayyappan is the annual pilgrimage to Sabarimalai, in which only men, preadolescent girls, and postmenopausal women are allowed to participate the journey, pilgrims are required to observe strict vows of celibacy and abstain from meat and intoxicants for a period of, traditionally, 41 days barefoot to the hilltop where the shrine, and during the pilgrimage linguistic and economic differences among participants.

A late Sanskrit text describes Ayyappan as the son of Shiva and Vishnu (with the latter in his form as the enchantress Mohini) in Malayalam and Kodagu adoption by a local king focus on his later life, in which he grew to be a renowned warrior who first set out to defeat and was subsequently worshipped by the Muslim chieftain Vavar (to whom there is a shrine en route to Sabarimalai).

Lord Ayyappa is a very popular Hindu in South India was born out of the union between God Shiva and Mohini, an avatar of Lord Vishnu, also called Sartavu or Śāsta, in Hinduism, a deity who is always celibate, generally depicted in a yogic posture, with a bell around his neck. The shrine of Sabarimalai is an ancient temple where the prince of the Pandalam dynasty, an avatar of Shasta, meditated at Sabarimalai temple and became one with the place where the prince meditated Mani mandapam, the kingdom of Pandalam also situated within a dense forest is primarily a healer of snakebites who sits with theertham in one hand and bhasmam (sacred ash) in the other if anybody comes there with a snakebite, the priest has to open the sanctum sanctorum and apply ash on the wound.

Ayyappa was a master of 18 weapons step to each of those weapons, which Ayyappa finally surrendered at the pathinettam padi is the name extracted from the Erumakolli myth tells that Lord Ayyappa killed Mahishi in this place on the way to collect milk means buffalo Eruma in Malayalam hence the name erumakolli.

Another unique aspect of this temple is that it is not open throughout the year is for worship only during the days of Mandala pooja, Makaravilakku, and also during the first day of every Malayalam month that the pilgrims have to observe celibacy for 41 days before going to Sabarimalai brought a golden belt and tied it around the legs so that the Lord felt comfortable to sit in the position and remained in the temple to bless the devotees forever why we find the golden belt tied to the legs of Ayyappan.

Denotes the onset of the viratham wearing them on a Saturday or the day of Uthram sign considered auspicious the birth star of Sree Ayyappa promised to marry her the day kanni-swamis (new devotees) stop visiting him with their prayers at Sabarimalai woman agreed to wait for him at a neighbouring temple woman is also worshipped today as Malikapurathamma at a temple the version of history that Sajeev puts forth, Ayyappa belonged to their community and lived in the 12th century.

Utram (Uttara Phalguni in Samskrutam) is the birth star (Janma Nakshatra) of Lord called Hariharaputra, to be born from the union of Shiva and Mohini to evil manipulations of his stepmother went to forest and killed demoness Mahishi and came to kingdom riding on tiger milk of tiger to his stepmother after that he went to dense forest and disappeared the instructions of Ayyappa, King built temple for Ayyappa in Sabarimalai.

Hence, to remove Ayyappa from her path, the Queen sent him to the forest on the pretext of asking him to get milk to cure herself of a mysterious disease doting son left for the wood to follow his instructions, but on his way, he came across Mahishi, the demoness agreed Indra turned into a mighty tiger for him to ride on other devas also turned into tigers and followed him. from the forest spread fast people of started

gathering to greet him to Hindu mythology Ayyappa meditated in Sabarimalai after killing the powerful demon Mahishi.

Temples typically show him as a celibate yogi temple Achankovil Sree Dharmasastha Temple near depicts him as a married man with two wives and Pushkala son Satyaka As the pilgrimage season has begun, devotees will be at Sabarimalai temple to worship King Rajashekhara of Pandalam and his wife's would-famous shrine in Sabarimalai to the worship of Lord Ayyappa, who is also known as Manikandan/Manikanthan pilgrimage season has begun will find thousands of devotees thronging the region to pay obeisance to the young boy, who chose to reside at the Sabarimalai.

The Devas combined their powers to create Durga, who killed Mahishasura for creating havoc to avenge the death of Mahishasura, Mahishi, in the universe while performing a penance pleased Brahma and with a boon which stated that only a child born to Shiva and Vishnu could kill her, Mahishi misused the blessing as she knew she had become invincible But little did she know that the gods would outsmart her transformed into his Mohini avatar and united with Shiva to produce a child this child came to be known as HariHara Putra Therefore, the purpose of birth was to eliminate Mahishi and help her attain Moksha.

King Rajashekhara of Pandalam and his wife were when the King visited the forest found an abandoned baby boy and took the baby to a sage who advised him to adopt it childless couple with a child prince to a legendary Queen who gave birth to a son after having a biological child, she started alienating Ayyappa was also against the decision to make Ayyappa his royal heir, to remove Ayyappa from her path, the Queen sent him to the forest on the pretext of asking him to get milk to cure herself of a mysterious disease

doting son left for the wood to follow his instructions, but on his way, he came across Mahishi, the demoness, he served the purpose of his birth by killing Mahishi.

The Queen wanted to eliminate Ayyappa, and she was confident that the tigers in the forest would kill him returned to the kingdom mounted on a tigress and several tigers in tow at ease in the presence of ferocious animals, the King and the Queen realized that Manikanthan was no ordinary human proved that he was a doting son to his parents but chose to decline the offer of ruling the kingdom, he aimed an arrow at the Sabarimalai to reside there female Hindus believe himself placed restrictions on women entering the temple because he wanted to be the celibate presence of women would distract him from this cause.

Malai on a Saturday or the day of Uthram, the sign considered is the birth star of Sree Ayyappan clothes symbolically indicate a mind withdrawn from all materialist objects cloth suggests the Ayyappa devotee is dead to the world of perceptions, emotions, and thoughts he in of Ayyappa. Shani agreed that he would spare Ayyappa devotees from his eyes return Lord Ayyappa assured that all his devotees would wear black dress 3is the colour associated with Lord Shani. Pilgrims visiting the Sabarimalai Ayyappa temple wear the black dress – black dhoti, trousers, shirt T-shirt opt for the saffron colour dress Lord Tulasi and Blue Shankupushpam are the favourite flowers of Lord Ayyappa may offer any fragrant flowers Jasmine, Rose, and Marigold among others from that, you also any blue red coloured flowers 100 temples in Kerala to Ayyappan are allowed to enter all other temples of Ayyappan, so some argue that making an exception for Sabarimalai is unusual and inconsistent chief minister of Kerala, Pinarayi Vijayan, entry to Sabarimalai.

The temple and removal of the mala can be the same through your mother in the house itself can perform for your father the mala is auspicious only if your wife delivers a

child during the period when you are wearing the mala steps to be for other reasons too one, Ayyappa was a master of 18 weapons each to each of those weapons, which Ayyappa believed to have finally surrendered at the pathinettam padi the eighteenth step only wish: The cardamom seeds they pluck in the preparation of Ayyappa's favourite dessert.

Religious practices mandate the after prayers from a temple priest or a Guru Swami – a person who has completed 18 Sabarimalai pilgrimages in the prayer room/place of own home after the pilgrimage sitting posture is called Yoga asana, which is different from the other idols. Yogasana is meditating. The lap has the worldly meaning of providing space to the consort's left lap seat or place for the wife/ consort.

As he wears the holy around his neck, the pilgrim swears total allegiance to Lord with whom he surrenders his thoughts, words, and deeds to the powerful deity and begins to lead the austere life of an ascetic who can keep Idols you want to worship at home, but make sure you avoid their Rudra or angry form or avatar as it is not auspicious Sabarimalai Temple follows dress code for men who wish to seek the blessings of the Lord One must not wear any upper garment like shirts or vests. One must wear a black, orange, or dark blue dhoti 10 – 55 are not allowed to visit Sabarimalai.

Manikanthan killed the demon when he was twelve years old, and after instructing his father to erect a temple in his honour atop the hill, he vanished. Today, people know this temple as the Sabarimalai Ayyappa Temple. He is widely regarded as being an embodiment of Kumaraswami

Chapter II

Son of Shiva, Karthikeya and His Deeds

The asura king snarled and launched an avalanche of arrows at his adversary. Kartikeya countered with his mystic spear, which emitted a flurry of sparks, incinerating the oncoming missiles with consummate ease. The champion of the gods then whirled his discus. The twirling orb of light danced lethally through the asura army, obliterating Surapadma's hordes. Weaponless, armour shattered and flagstaff severed, Surapadma stood defenseless on the field. Son of Shiva is the gripping narrative of the warrior-god Kartikeya, commander-in-chief of the heavenly hosts, and epitome of wisdom and valour. The book depicts in mesmerizing prose the monumental battle between the forces of good and evil, as embodied by the devas and asuras.

Kumara swami was grown by Krithikas. So, he was called as Karthikeya. Within one day he had grown up from infancy to youth as taking the milk by 6 Krithikas. He drank at them with six faces in the same time. That is why he got the name Shanmukha. He slipped from the stomach of Ganga mother. (Skanda) so he achieved the name of Skandha. He was born as Ganga bore the Tejas, filled by Agni, which was originally of Siva taken by Agni deva on the order of the other Devatas. So, he is Agnisambhava.

Uma agreed him as her son (Kumara) So he became Kumara sambhava. By the severe tapas he got Brahma Gnanam and so Subrahmanya. Su means very good. Subrahmanya. At once he became the commander in chief of armies and won the war against Asuras. Subrahmanya had to become commander because Siva went to tapas to

Himalayas. Till then, Siva was commander of Devatas. The devotees who love and worship Skandha will go to Skandalokam.

All of this story was told to Rama by Vishwamitra in Bala kanda of Valmiki Ramayana. It is known that Karthikeya was born out of Agni and as a child, he was taken of by Kritika. A constellation of 6 stars (Pleiades) or as in mythology, 6 kritika sisters. Therefore he developed a face for each of them, endowed with great qualities by the kritika sisters. He's even named after them. Each of his face or personality represents a particular quality. He is the commander in chief of devasena. Fiercest warrior in north India he is considered to be the elder brother of Ganesh. While in south he is the younger brother of Ganesh.

It is said that because Ganesh was married earlier than him despite him being elder, he took it as an insult and left Kailash to go to south India and rule over the lands. Later he married daughters of Indra, that is why he's primarily worshipped in south India, some of his names are Subramanian, Kumaran, Murugan and Velan. Lord Kartikeya was not born from the third eye of Lord Shiva. This is a false story. People think Kartikeya was born only from Lord Shiva and Ganesha was born only from Ma Parvati, but it is not so.

Now coming to how Lord Kartikeya was born. He was born with fusion of the energy of Lord Shiva and Mata Parvati. In Shiva Puran he is told to be Shiva Swarupa. He had the qualities of Shiva. He is not an Avatar but has the powers of Shiva, and thus he is very powerful. Avatar means the Lord descends on earth. Sadashiva has already descended on Kailash. He is always near his devotees. Kartikeya was the son of Shiva. He was his swarup but not avatar.

Subramanian himself is a snake. Here is how it is! Subramanian is not some god sitting in some other world. he is the very kundalini within us. He is within us. Look at the birth of Subramanian. Shiva's retas first got spilled on the ground (Earth). Earth couldn't bear it's splendor it threw in Agni. Agni couldn't bear it and he threw it in Ganga. Ganga couldn't bear that in her womb for long so she deposited it in Himalayas where in the forest of reeds that retas transformed into a baby. This is the cycle. He went from Muladhara to Sahasrara chakra passing through the six chakras each presiding over the five elements. Since he passed through six chakras, the six chakras are his six heads.

He is the very kundalini which exists within us. Since kundalini is said to be a snake, Subramanian is worshiped as a snake. Both of Murugan/ Karthikeya's wives, namely, Devasena and Valli, were daughters of Lord Vishnu who had performed very harsh austerities with the aim of being granted the boon of becoming Murugan's consorts, and their wish was granted by their father when he was satisfied by their determination.

Kumaraswami, also known as Skanda, Murugan, Ayyappa and Subramanyaswami, is the elder son of Shiva and Parvathi. He is the commander in chief of the Shiva's army (gana). He was born with a purpose. Historically, he is an ancient deity. Coins depicting his images belonging to the early Christian era and minted by the Kushanas were found in north western India. His exploits as a warrior, his conflicts with Indra, his association with southern India and his status as the son of Shiva, all to the rising importance of Saivism the changes that happened within the Vedic tradition in ancient India, following the decline of the Vedic gods and their relegation to a secondary status as Dikpalas or rulers of directions.

Unlike Ganesha, Kumaraswami has a well-built physique, darker complexion, and warrior like demeanor. In the images, he radiates strength and charm. Described as intelligent, knowledgeable, and swift in action, he uses a full feathered peacock as his personal vehicle. According to the legends, he was created by Shiva and Parvathi to slay a demon by the name Tarakasura. After he was born, Shiva made him the commander in chief of his armies and instructed him to fight the demon. Though he was young, he fought bravely and slew the demon, for which he earned the title Tarkari. As a boy he was suckled by the six divine mothers of the constellation known as Kritika (Pleades) and thus came to be known as Kartikeya.

As the elder son of Shiva he is addressed fondly as Kumara, which means a boy of eternal youth. Since he is generally pleasant and peaceful, unlike the hyperactive Ganesha, he is also called Santakumara. Because he is very aggressive and a ferocious against his enemies during wars, he is called Skanda, which means he who attacks. He became Krauchabheta after breaking apart a mountain called Krauncha.

He is also known as Guha (the secret), Gangeya (son of Ganga) and Swaminatha. In the images he is shown with six heads and twelve arms or with one head and two arms. He is also depicted variously as sitting on his knees, seated on a pedestal with his Shaktis, standing by the side of his peacock or riding upon it.

"Murugan is the God of religion and yoga. He is the second son of Siva, born of His divine mind. His electric power awakens spiritual wisdom to propel souls onward in their evolution to Siva's feet. He is the son of Lord Shiva and Parvati and is worshipped and venerated mainly in south India. He is known by different names – Lord Murugan, Lord

Swaminatha, Sanmukha, Subramaniam, Skanda, Shadanana, Guha, and more.

Furthermore, he is the commander of the Devas and the God of war.

In Hindu mythology, Lord Kartikeya is a well-known character. He used a variety of monikers, including Murugan, Subramaniam, Sanmukha, Skanda, and Guha. In India's southern states, he is well known for playing the role of Lord Murugan. All over South India, there are several temples devoted to the deity. Lord Kartikeya is a well known figure in Hindu mythology. He addressed by different names such as Murugan, Subramaniam, Sanmukha, Skanda and Guha. He is most popular as Lord Murugan in the southern states of India.

A number of temples dedicated to the deity can be spotted all over the South India. The story of the birth of Lord Kartikeya or Murugan has different versions. In some texts it is said that He is the son of 'Agni' or the God of Fire. However according to the Skanda Purana, Kartikeya is said to be the elder son of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. It is also believed that Kartikeya was not born from the womb of Parvati. The Goddess was cursed by Rati, the consort of Kama (God of Love) that she would never be able to bear children.

According to the legends, there was a demon named Tarakasura who asked for the boon that he should only be killed by Lord Shiva's son. He knew very well that Lord Shiva was an ascetic and he would not marry or have children. Hence, Tarakasura would be invincible. However after much ado, Lord Shiva finally married Goddess Parvati. Since Parvati couldn't conceive due to the curse, Lord Shiva took her to a cave and asked. Her to meditate as they both meditated, a ball of fire emerged out of their cosmic energies. In the mean time, the other Gods being insecure from Tarakasura, sent Agni or

the God of fire to get hold of the ball of fire. But even Agni couldn't bear the heat of the energy of Shiva and Parvati. So, he handed over the ball to Goddess Ganga. When even Ganga couldn't bear the heat, she deposited the fire ball into a lake in a forest of reeds.

Then Goddess Parvati took the form of this water body as she alone could bear the energy of Shiva and Shakti. Finally the fire ball took the form of a baby with six faces. Hence, Kartikeya is also known as Sanmukha or the 'God with Six Faces'. He was first spotted and taken care of by six water nymphs who represented the Pleiades or the Kritikas. So, the divine child was known as

Kartikeya or the son of the Kritikas later Kartikeya kills Tarakasura and becomes the commander-in-chief of the Gods. Lord Kartikeya is depicted as a dark, young man with a spear in His hand. His mount is a peacock and He symbolizes power and strength. Through the blessings of Lord Kartikeya, one can achieve great strength and get rid of all his woes. His peacock represents Him as the destroyer of all bad habits and a conqueror of sensual desires. Kartikeya represents perfection and the need for every human to move towards being perfect.

Kartikeya is considered the son of Shiva and Parvathi, who was created to kill the Asuras and be the eternal protector of the Devas and other living beings. The Asuras were demigods who frequently warred against the Devas or gods. The six sites (padaiveedu) in Tamil Nadu where Kartikeya sojourned while leading his armies are Palani, Swamimalai, Thiruparamkundram, Pazhamudirsolai, Thiruthani and Thiruchendur, the Arupadaiveedu.

Kartikeya is considered the God of Tamil language and he is mentioned a lot in Sangam literature. The six abodes of Kartikeya are all in Tamil Nadu. Each of these

temples has a unique history and different reason to worship Lord Murugan. Thai Pooam during January – February month is celebrated as a 6-day festival. On Thai Pooam day, Kavadis and Palkudams are taken by devotees in procession around Chhedanagar.

Special Abhishekams are performed to the Moolavar and Utsavar. Annadhanam is provided to all devotees participating in the functions. In the night, Kartikeya is taken in procession accompanied by Nadaswaram, Veda Parayanam around Chhedanagar.

Vaikasi Visakam day, (during May –June month), Kavadis and Palkudams are taken by devotees in procession around Chhedanagar. Kanda Sashti during October-November month is celebrated as a 6-day festival.

Devotees of Kartikeya will fast for 6 days. On the evening of the 6th day, Soorasamharam (correcting sooran) will be held at every Kartikeya temple around the world. Soorasamharam (correcting sooran) at Thiruchendur is every special. Muruga symbolizes a union of polarities. He is handsome warrior and described as a celibate yogi. He uses his creative martial abilities to lead an army against Taraka and other demons, and described as a philosopher-warrior. He is a uniter, championing the attributes of both Shaivism and Vaishnavism.

There are numerous symbolism regarding the six heads of Muruga. It is believed that the six faces of Muruga represents five elements there, fire, water, earth, air – and the sixth the spirit that infuses life into the beings formed by the elements. Praying to Lord Murugan also makes one very brave, courageous, prevents nervousness, and makes one intelligent. Besides that, chanting of the Murugan Mantras also prevent ill luck, evil-eyes, nightmares, and protection from evil spirits and curses.

The Rashi/Zodiac of Name Murugan is Simha/Leo (M, TT) and Nakshatra is Magha/Makam (Ma, Me, Mu, Mi). The Shatkona is a hexagram and is associated with the son of Shiva-Shakti, Lord Murugan. Stylistically, it is identical to the Jewish Star of David and the Japanese Kagome crest. The snows of Mount Kailash sparkled, as if reflecting the brilliance of the august assembly gathered in homage before Shiva. The mahayogi was immersed in transcendental meditation. Parvati, beauty incarnate, sat beside him, a benign lighting up her face.

Vishnu and Brahma stood in reverence before the supreme lord, along with Surya, Chandra, Indra, Agni and the other guardians of the Eight Cardinal directions. The music of the gandharvas wafted softly on the blossom-scented breeze, melding with the devout chant of the ganas, “Om namah Shivayah!”

The air vibrated with tangible divinity as Shiva slowly emerged from his deep trance, smiled serenely at his audience and raised his right hand in the varadahasta of benediction. As the gathered Gods bowed in reverence, Parvati turned to her husband and remarked, rather smugly, it must be admitted, “My lord, it is eminently fitting that the devas pay obeisance to us. It is but their overt acknowledgement of our sovereignty over the worlds. After all, it is you who ordain and define Brahma’s and Vishnu’s respective roles as creator and Protector. You alone hold the cosmos in your being of course, in my body and forms”.

The atmosphere darkened and a low rumbling punctuated Kailash’s serene calm. Shiva’s ash- smeared body stiffened ominously. Unaware of the incipient frown on her spouse’s brow, Parvati blithely continued, “You control the workings of the universe, which lies in me. I am the embodiment of “Parvati.” The furious voice cut through her

words like cold steel and sparks flew from the third eye that gaped open on Shiva's shining brow.

Mahadeva declared, "I am the cosmos. Like the fragrance innate in a flower; like the oil fused into a sesame seed, like the sound implicit in a bell or the heat inherent in a flame I pervade every being, including you, for all eternity. Without my consent, the tiniest ion will not stir". He sprang to his feet and roared, "Behold!"

Before Parvati's horrified gaze, the furious God gathered his cosmic force into himself, withdrew from the worlds and towered over her as a dense, swirling pillar of flame. Bereft of energy, the earth and water, the sun and moon, devas and mortals, all sank into oblivion. The only thing that remained in the eerie silence was an immense, dark void. Parvati froze in terror and closed her dazzled eyes, as vicious tongues of fire darted round her. Slowly, she raised her hands in supplications.

"My Lord, you are an ocean of compassion. Forgive my thoughtless pride. Restore the universe and shower your blessings on creation once more." The fiery pillar slowed its gyration and stopped. Its blinding radiance dimmed. Shiva, his anger appeased, resumed his benevolent form. He surveyed the bleak wasteland that was the universe and closed his eyes in meditation. A flurry of dazzling sparks flew from his third eye and metamorphosed into Eleven Crore rudras. At his bidding, these fierce manifestations of his power renewed the ravaged cosmos. Light dispelled the darkness, wind and water reanimated the cosmos, and the shaken devas once more stood before the sovereign lord. With a serene, reassuring smile, Shiva directed them to go about their ordained tasks.

He then turned to his wife. "Parvati, you are the universal mother, yet you allowed your pride to shroud the cosmos in darkness. According to the dictates of dharma, I

cannot overlook this transgression; it calls for some form of penance.” Filled with remorse, Parvati said, “ My Lord, I bow to your will.” Shiva pondered for a moment. Then he directed, “Go to the river Yamuna, which is especially blessed as the sister of Yama, the God of Death. There, take the form of the auspicious shankha the conch shell and perform your penance to me, while floating on the petals of an immaculate White Lotus.”

With the Sun in makaram and the maha nakshatra ruling the sky, Daksha, accompanied by his wife and a large entourage of Gods and rishis, arrived on the bank of the Yamuna for his ritual bath. As he entered the cool water, a flash of dazzling white caught his eyes. Among the profusion of pink and red lotuses, was a single bloom of pristine white. An exquisite, flawless white conch lay cushioned in its unfurled petals. The prajapati carefully picked up the shankha. To his amazement, the fragile shell vanished and his hands now held a beautiful infant girl, gurgling happily up at him.

Flooded by love, Daksha cradled the child tenderly and gave her to his wife saying , “Vedavalli, this is our daughter Gauri, the fair one.” At the age of five, Gauri went to him and said, “Father, my games and toys no longer interest me. There is a vast emptiness within me that I just cannot understand. My heart yearns to meditate on Shiva. Please give me your permission to set aside the palace routine and undertake penance.”

Daksha was deeply moved by his little daughter’s precocious piety. Conscious of what the future held, he made arrangements for her to embark on her tapas, accompanied by her companions and maids. Taraka had three sons: Tarakaksha, Vidyunmali, and Kamalaksha, who were known as the Tripurasura. He is known to be slain by Kartikeya.

Murugan had two wives. The first one is Devasana (also called Devayani), the daughter of Lord Indra and his second wife is Valli, the daughter of a Nambi Raja, a tribal chief.

An incarnation of the goddess Sundaravalli, daughter of Vishnu, Valli is born on earth as the daughter of a chieftain, leading a life of a huntress. Murugan, the god of war, eventually woos and weds her, according to Tamil folklore. Ashok Sundari was born after Kartikeya. You must have heard about Ashok Sundari in the mythological stories of Gujarat and its surrounding areas. She has also been mentioned in Shiva Purana and Padma Purana. It is said that Parvati received Ashok Sundari as a boon in order to overcome her loneliness.

Lord Kartikeya is the son of Lord Shiva and considered as the God of War. The temple at Pushkar celebrates Karthikeya's brahmachari form and restricts entry to women. Lord Murugan, the son of Shiva and Parvati, is a much-revered deity of Hindus especially in South India. He is known by various names like Kartikeya, Shanmukha (Shanmuga), Subramanian, Shadanana, Guha, Senthil, Saravana, Kumaraswamy and Skanda (Refer 108 Names of Lord Murugan). His six most important shrines in India are the Arupadaiveedu or the Six Abodes of Murugan, which are temples located in Tamil Nadu. Murugan rides a peacock and wields a bow in battle. During His bachelorhood, Lord Murugan is also regarded as Kumaraswami (Bachelor God), 'Kumara' meaning a bachelor and 'Swami' meaning God.

According to the legend, Murugan is married to two deities. The first one is Devasana (also called Devayani or Deivanai), the daughter of Lord Indra and his second wife is Valli (she was found in a pit, dug out while gathering the edible tubers of the valli-plant), the daughter of a tribal chief. The two wives of Lord Murugan, namely

Devasena and Valli refer to Kriya Shakti and Ichha Shakti, meaning the Power of Action and Power of Will respectively, while Lord Murugan represents Gyana Shakti or the power of Wisdom.

In her previous birth Valli & her sibling Devasena were the daughters of Lord Vishnu & both of them undertook several penances to become the consorts of Lord Murugan, who appeared before them & gave them the boon of the marriage in their next birth. Lord Murugan fulfilled the prayers of both his sincere devotees and demonstrated the power of devotion to the entire world by marrying them both. There is a regular, formal spiritual path prescribed by the Vedas and the other path is the unconventional path characterized by powerful feelings and emotions towards the Lord just leaving aside the mechanic formalities. Devasena and Valli represent these two types of devotion towards the supreme self. Where Valli took the spiritual way, Devasena chose the path of emotions and passion.

Devasena was gifted in marriage to Lord Murugan by Indra after he vanquished the demons. Devasena was in her previous birth the daughter of Vishnu, the king of Gods, who too did an austere penance to get her wedded to Lord Murugan. The marriage with Devasena happened in the most orthodox way and is described as the Vaidika type of wedding. On the other hand, the story of Murugan's courtship and his union with Valli, daughter of Nambi Raja, a tribal chieftain of a people called the Veddars or Kuravars, is the most important of all Tamil myths of the second marriage of a God. In her earlier birth, Valli was the daughter of Lord Vishnu and she undertook a severe penance to get married to Lord Murugan. Valli represents the Jiva or the soul under the veil of ignorance. Under the guidance of the Guru Narada, the veil of ignorance is torn

away and the soul marches towards liberation or Moksha. This is the symbolic idea represented by the marriage of Valli and Lord Murugan which happened in an unconventional way and is described either as Gandharva or Paisacha kind of marriages.

The Lord saw Valli in the fields and assumed the form of handsome tribal hunter. She asked him to leave as the chief was coming. After the chief left, he changed back into the hunter form and proposed to Valli but she refused. He then changed himself into an old man. He asked Valli for food & she gave him a mixture of millet flour & honey. She provided him with water too to which the lord jokingly remarked that she can quench his thirst for a companion too. However, this remark made her angry so the Lord requested his brother, Lord Ganesha for help. Lord Ganesha appeared as a wild elephant and upon seeing the elephant, Valli ran back to the old man pleading to save her. Lord Murugan proposed to save her only if she agreed to marry him. At the heat of moment, she agreed & Lord revealed his true form. It was then that Valli realized that it was her beloved Lord, who was with her all the time.

In front of her parents, Murugan assumed his true divine shape. Amazed and awed, the hunters worshipped him and begged him to come to the hamlet to be married in accordance with the custom of the tribe. The whole village, thus, rejoiced. The young pair was seated on a tiger-skin. Nambi, Valli's father placed the hand of Valli into the hand of Murugan and declared them married. At that moment, the Gods appeared in the air and blessed everyone. Nambi then offered a feast plenty of honey, millet flour and jungle fruits. After a short stay at Ceruttani (Tiruttani), Murugan and Valli returned to Skandagiri where they were welcomed by Devasena.

Lord Muruga with Valli and Devayani – Tanjore painting According to the legend, Murugan is married to two deities. The first one is Devasana (also called Devayani or Deivanai), the daughter of Lord Indra and his second wife is Valli, the daughter of a tribal chief. The two wives of Lord Murugan, namely Devasana and Valli refer to Kriya Shakti and Ichha Shakti, meaning the Power of Action and Power of Will respectively, while Lord Murugan represents Gyana Shakti or the power of Wisdom.

In the all-pervading ambience of happiness, Rati came forward to plead for Kamadeva's resurrection. She declared passionately, "Without the pleasures of love, what else can ameliorate moral sorrow? Life will be an empty husk; bulls will abandon their cows, stallions their mares and bees their flowers! Families will be torn asunder." Rati turned to Parvati and reminded her of her promise to intercede. "You who sought your own beloved through the ages: you, above

The story of Murugan's courtship and his union with the daughter of the hunters, Valli, is the most important of all Tamil myths of the second marriage of a god. In the Sanskrit tradition, Skanda is either an eternal brahmacharin (bachelor) or the husband of a rather colourless deity, Devasana, the Army of the Gods. In Tamil, in contrast, the earliest reference to a bride of Murugan is to Valli and there can be no doubt whatsoever that Valli is the more popular and more important of Murugan's two brides. Hence, I do regard the lovely myth of Murugan and Valli as an indigenous-autochthonous myth, a Dravidian myth; it also contains some of the oldest indigenous fragments of myth to survive, and some of the most ancient conceptual and ideological apparatus of the Tamils.

The standard version, considered by Tamil devotees of Murugan as canonical and definitive (although not the only one current!), is found as the very last (24th) canto of the sixth book of Kacciyappa's Kantapuram (composed around 1350 AD in Kanchipuram); entitled Valliyammai tirumanappasalam, it has 267 stanzas. Here is its brief summary:

There is a mountain called Valli Malai or Valli Verpu, not far from the village of Merpati, in the Tontainatu country. In a village beneath the hill lived a hunter called Nampi; all his children being boys, he longed for a little girl. On the mountain slope, an ascetic by name of Śivamuni was engaged in austerities. One day a gazelle went by, and the ascetic was aroused by its lovely shape; his lascivious thoughts made the gazelle pregnant. The daughter of Mal incarnated in the embryo.

In due time, the gazelle gave birth to a girl in a pit dug out by the women of the hunter-tribe when they searched for the tubers of edible yam (valli). The female deer, having found out that she had given birth to a strange being, abandoned the child which was discovered by the hunter-chief Nampi and his wife. Overwhelmed with joy, they took the little girl to their hut and named her Valli.

When Valli reached the age of twelve, she was sent to the millet field - in agreement with the custom of the hillmen - to guard the crop against parrots and other birds, sitting in an elevated platform called itanam (paran), and chasing the birds and other beasts away. The sage Narada, who visited Valli-malai and saw the girl, went to Tanikai to inform God Murugan about Valli's exceptional beauty and her devotion to the god of the hunters.

The old man asked Valli for food, and she gave him some millet flour mixed with honey. Then she took him to a small forest pond, where she quenched his thirst from the palms of her hands. Then he told her, "Now that you have satisfied my hunger and my thirst, do satisfy my love for you." Valli reproached him, and wanted to return to her field. Murugan called on his brother Vinyaka to assist at that precise moment, and Vinyaka materialised behind Valli as a dreadful elephant. The terrified girl fled into the Saiva ascetic's arms for safety; he carried her into a thicket and, while he held her, showed his true appearance, which consisted of six heads, twelve arms, and a peacock perched on his back.

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Carried away by this vision of her favourite god, Valli worshipped him and he told her that she was, in fact, the daughter of Tirumal. Valli complied with his wish, and they loved each other. A female companion of Valli questioned the girl about her absence and the striking change in her appearance, but Valli answered evasively. Soon after that, Murugan, again in the shape of a hunter, appeared in front of the two girls, and the companion observed that Valli and the hunter exchanged amorous looks. Therefore, she demanded that the hunter remove himself. He then admitted his love for Valli and he warned the companion that, if she would not help them to meet and enjoy their love, he would resort to the old custom of matal or riding the toy-horse in the village itself.

As the harvesting time approached, the tribesmen called Valli back to the hamlet and the lovemaking was over. With a heavy heart she returned to the house of Nambi. Her clandestine love affair (kalavu) with the god ended. Her mother noticed Valli's unhappiness and invited soothsaying women who stated that Valli was possessed by the cūr of the slopes and that a ceremony in honour of God Murugan should be organized. Murugan went to the millet field and, not finding Valli there, he came, at midnight, to the hamlet, and with the aid of her companion, Valli and her divine lover eloped.

Next morning Nambi's wife discovered Valli's disappearance. The furious hunter-chief organized a party of hillmen in pursuit of the fugitives. When they reached them, they discharged their arrows at Murugan, but the divine cock of the god crowed and the hunters fell dead. Valli lamented their death, but Murugan took her along. On their way they met Narada who explained to Murugan that he should have obtained the consent of the parents. The god therefore returned and ordered Valli to resuscitate the hunters which she gladly did. Murugan then assumed his true divine shape. Amazed and awed, the hunters worshipped him and begged him to return to the hamlet to be married in accordance with the custom of the tribe.

The whole village rejoiced. The Next morning Nambi's wife discovered Valli's disappearance. The furious hunter-chief organized a party of hillmen in pursuit of the fugitives. When they reached them, they discharged their arrows at Murugan, but the divine cock of the god crowed and the hunters fell dead. Valli lamented their death, but Murugan took her along. On their way they met Narada who explained to Murugan that he should have obtained the consent of the parents. The god therefore returned and ordered Valli to resuscitate the hunters which she gladly did. Murugan then assumed his

true divine shape. Amazed and awed, the hunters worshipped him and begged him to return to the hamlet to be married in accordance with the custom of the tribe. The whole village rejoiced. The whole village rejoiced. The young pair was seated on a tiger-skin. Nampi placed the hand of Valli into the hand of Murugan and declared them married while Nārada assisted. At that moment, the gods appeared in the air and blessed everyone. Nampi then offered a feast - plenty of honey, millet flour and jungle fruits. After a short stay at Ceruttani (Tiruttani), Murugan and Valli returned to Skandagiri where they were welcomed by Devasena.

What is so very thrilling in this story is the fact that almost step by step its structural slots and their fillers are derived from elements of the oldest Tamil tradition. It is the classical Sangam age all over: the heroine born among the hillmen; at the age of twelve, sent to guard the millet field sitting in the paran; the appearance of the god the talaivan, the hero, and his attempts at immediate, clandestine love-making (kalavu); the role of the toli -- the companion of the heroine; the motif of riding the matal-horse; the kaamanoy -- love sickness of Valli due to separation; the soothesaying women, and the veri dance of the velan, arranged to appease Murugan and dispell the motif of elopment of overs. It is clear that this tale is entirely and solely Tamil.

Chapter III

The Warrior God Ayyappa and His Deeds

Hinduism has a few origin myths that are somewhat unique, but the trinity (trimurti) of Brahma(n, Vishnu, and Iva is the fundamental idea. Brahm is the creator, Viju upholds the creation, Iva founded it, and at last, after it has served its function, Iva will destroy it. To allow beings of the light to gain knowledge through their exile-related experiences for example. The creator, Brahman (neuter), is self-born and eternal in his ultimate but formless state (nirgua), and he manifests as Brahm (male) in his created state (sagua), which has attributes.

The manifested Brahman who appears with Viu and Iva, is the one who does it, who causes it all to come to be, to appear, and to exist out of this energy. In the extensive Sanskrit literature, there are a variety of descriptions of how this happens. There are consorts for these major deities. Saraswathi, Lakshmi, and Parvathy are the wives of Brahm, Viu, and Iva, respectively. Numerous other names for each of these deities exist, denoting either various incarnations or various traditions and aspects of them.

The fact that a high entity was born in that trinity under really unique circumstances is interesting. For a variety of circumstances, Vishnu assumed the form of Mohini. She was embraced by Iva when he was fascinated by her beauty, which is how Dharma was created. The origins of this are the subject of numerous stories. According to one account, they had sex, and as she lacked a womb, Dharmast was born "between her thighs".

Another believes that Ivas semen dropped to the ground and Dharmast emerged from it after a "violent coupling" with Mohini. Since Mohini's body was actually female and homosexuals sare unable to have children, there appears to be resistance to seeing

this as a homosexual act in various interpretation attempts. However, it is unlikely that this was a homosexual act. Iva and Prvat, who was present, are alleged to have abandoned the child in humiliation. Mahisura, an asura with a buffalo's head, once resided in the area that is now home to Mysore (formally known as Mysuru). He terrorized the populace, and they prayed for his deliverance.

Then the goddess Durg, who was actually Prvat, arrived and killed him. His wife, Mahisur or Mahi, who some sources refer to as his sister, was enraged and managed to obtain a blessing from the gods prohibiting her from being killed as well, save by someone descended from Viu and Iva (obviously such a boon must have some exemption that is frequently nearly impossible). The "trick" employed by Mohin allowed for this to be overcome, allowing Dharmast to kill Mahi as well. The term "killing" has a different meaning in this context than it does in the human world. In reality, it refers to releasing someone from a physical.

Trapping in an incarnation, which allows the spirit or entity thus incarnated to leave it and proceed without it, as was the case with Mahi, who was thereafter relieved to be set free. In a strict sense, murdering someone in a certain method has the same result as releasing a soul from the body. The problem is that humans have no concept what this entails and are surely not capable of killing with "divine" purpose. Therefore, killing is always considered a serious crime by humans. Actually, a curse had caused Mahi to change into a human with a buffalo's head. Dharmast didn't actually "kill" her; instead, he freed her from the curse. There are times when things appear differently in the heavenly and spiritual realms.

Ayyappa, to whom a well-known temple on the abarimala Mountain is devoted, is

thought to have taken on the form of Dharmasasta millennia later in Kerala. The actual manifestation of Ayyappa, however, must have taken place no earlier than the 8th century CE, and it does not seem very persuasive that he would be an incarnation of Dharmasasta, given that he had a Muslim buddy named Vavar. Therefore, it is not a good idea to attribute the "killing of Mahi" to Ayyappa personally, but rather to Dharmasāstā. This "killing" must have occurred during the Mahbhrata era, when Dharmasāstā manifested as Maikaan or perhaps Bhtantha assuming the appearance of Maikaan or perhaps Bhtantha.

It should be noted that Paraurma, also known as "Rama with the Axe," is credited with building the temple for Ayyappan on the Sabarimala Mountain. However, since he dates back to the Mahbhrata era and Kerala has a long history of trade, the temple was likely built for Dharmasasta because of this. However, according to folklore, Ayyappa is thought to be an incarnation of Dharmasasta, which is why people tend to associate it with him. Ayyappa might not have actually been the same person as him, but rather a spiritually advanced sannyasin or teacher who was dedicated to Dharma. The folktales may have been little overblown, but he will have performed numerous good deeds (and reportedly even a few miracles).

The folk stories may have been a little overblown as they do not frequently. According to recent information from Kerala, there are currently plans to rename the temple to honour Dharmasasta..The notion that Ayyappan might be a Jesus incarnation has gained traction in our day and age. I believe that the statement in the previous paragraph raises some questions about this hypothesis. The Thomas Christians are a Christian society that has reportedly existed in Kerala since the year 52 CE, which is extraordinary.

According to legend, Thomas, an apostle, visited and established this colony. How come he should go there? Had Jesus instructed him to do it? The question of whether Jesus was in India during the "missing years" between the ages of 12 and 30, which constitute a historical gap in the New Testament, has been the subject of extensive debate and written exploration.

The Church and Christian theologians, as might be expected, reject the notion and assert that there are other indications about how he would have spent these years, such as the incredibly unlikely possibility that he had simply been working somewhere as a carpenter, who in that case would hardly have had anything highly spiritual about him (and would most likely have married)... Why, oh why, why on Earth didn't he travel the world instead? There is absolutely no logical basis for doing anything else. He could have easily sought knowledge and experience outside of the area in which he was born, and other peoples on this globe would have benefited from his teachings. After all, he was a fellow human.

Absolutely no logical justification exists for doing otherwise. As a fellow human being, he could have very well sought knowledge and experience outside of the region in which he was born, and other peoples on this planet would have benefited from his teachings. The only "reason" for rejecting this theory is one that is purely emotional. He would have discovered a lot of things that, according to contemporary theology, are incompatible with what they consider to be Christianity. Believing that it is impossible or more accurately unacceptable that "Eastern" influences may be present.

I once had the chance to stay for a few days at a Jesuit retreat centre close to Calcutta (modern-day Kolkata). When I went to their library, I found a book about the

development of Christianity in India. It stated that the Thomas Christians had numerous texts, all of which had been burned by the Church. What an offence! Because Thomas had visited Kerala before and was familiar with its inhabitants, I have no trouble imagining that Jesus sent him there. Ayyappa "birth" is another strange tale. A portion of Kerala was once ruled by a monarch named Rajasekara, who had no son to succeed him as king. He once heard a child weeping while taking a break by the Pamb river. When he went to look for it, he discovered a baby boy abandoned on a rock. An elderly Brahmi encouraged him to take the child home as he was debating what to do with it.

When it turned 12 years old, he would learn all about it and it would bring him glory. The boy was taken in by the monarch, who gave him the name Manikanta (which means "wearing a bell") since when he was discovered, he was wearing a small golden bell around his neck. This tale suggests that Ayyappa had a divine origin, which could support theories that he is related to Jesus. given that Ayyappa will have "born." Since he lived some 800 years or more after Jesus, the possibility that he was a reincarnation of Jesus should be taken into consideration since there is some evidence (see above) that suggests Jesus may have been in Kerala.

In Kerala, God Ayyappa celebrates a festival every year on Shabarimalayari. Literally, Sabarimalai means "the mountain of Shaber tribes." Only if born in Israel can a Jew be referred to be a "Shaber." This not only demonstrates the shared cultural heritage of Jewish traders in the Mediterranean and ancient India, but it also gives greater significance to the word Israel in the Jewish Bible. According to the Bible, Yakub, the father of Yusuf, was given the name "Israel" (which means wrestler), which he received as a result of his battles with God. Ayyappa had to engage in similar combat with Vavar, a warrior who wasn't Hindu. In Kerala, God Ayyappa celebrates a festival every

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Ayyappa of Sabarimalai seems to be a constant tug of war between the asuras and Devas to rule over the three worlds, namely Swarga, Dharti and Patalaloka. The author successfully manages to convince you that the asuras have been given a raw deal by the God and have been undermined constantly, their need for revenge justified. The storyline characterizes Indian Mythology aptly- sages worshipping the Gods with offering, tapas. A full –proof way of extracting boons from Trimurti, inter course with animals resulting in divine off springs, curses uttered in wrathful anger that come true, and the eternal fight between Good and Evil.

The book takes you through one failing asura after another in subduing the Gods, due to the latter's treacherous schemes clever use of loopholes in the wishes granted and the constant favors given by the Trimurti. Each chapter feels like a short story on its own, narrating incident leading to the birth of The Warrior God, Ayyappa and his story. The long and mending storyline leading to Ayyappa is somewhat exhausting and feels drawn out despite the authors way with words. The child of Shiva and Vishnu is conceived to defeat the buffalo asura princess, Mahishi. He comes across his nemesis

Mahishi, and defeats her in a fuel –raged battle that is witnessed by all of the cosmos.

Mahishi, the buffalo headed asura princess, wreaks vengeance on the devas for killing her brothers, the mighty Mahishasura. She subjugates the God and unleashes a reign of terror on the three worlds. “The asura and the boy stood motionless, locking eyes.” He emerged from the jungle the onto the banks of the Azhutha. There before him stood a huge she- buffalo. The she- buffalo is the Mahishi. The Ayyappa is the one who need to kill the she- buffalo Mahishi she is the Asura Princess, she is the wife of Datta in her previous life her name is Leelavathi.

And she was cursed by her husband. That she will rebirth has Asura Princes in that her name was Mahishi daughter of Karambhasura. And he was killed by the Indiran. Then, Mahishi was going to kill by Ayyappa. Ayyappa, also known as Aiyanar, Sastha, and Hariharaputra, who is today the focus of a major devotional tradition, emerged from the fusion of a Dravidian god of tribal provenance with the Puranic story of Shiva's sexual interaction with Vishnu. I For the story from the Bhagvata Purana, see 69. What is noteworthy about the story is that Shiva is not deluded in the way the demons are.

Shiva asks Vishnu to assume the Mohini form for his own viewing pleasure, his "delight," as one text puts it, and Vishnu acquiesces. There is no external pressure, only their own volition. Shiva is eulogized both in the Mababbarata and the Puranas as neither God, demon, mortal nor animal, neither man, woman nor eunuch. As Wendy O'Flaherty remarks, "without any feeling of contradiction, the devotee sees in Shiva the realization of all possibilities." In the Ayyappa legend Vishnu as Mohini becomes pregnant from intercourse with Shiva, and produces a child. Ashamed, Vishnu drops the baby to earth, where it is found and adopted by the Pandyan king Rajasekhara of Pantalarn. This

account of the god's birth is not found in the three Puranic narratives. The medieval legend invents it and refers to the child as *oni jata* (born of a not-vagina). The term *ayoni* is the same term used in texts like the *Manusmriti* and the *Arthashastra* to refer to nonvaginal of all kinds.

The child grows up to become a renowned warrior. In some versions he destroys a demon. He also gathers an army and fights the bandit chieftains who are ravaging the countryside. One of them is the Muslim pirate Vavar. Overcome in battle, Vavar becomes a close friend of Ayyappa and joins forces with him. It would appear that this story unites the local cult of a deified warrior chieftain with the Puranic account of Hariharaputra. Hariharaputra, whose name literally means "the son (putra) of Vishnu (Hari) and Shiva (Hara)," in his embodiment as Ayyappa (Father), represents the reconciliation of Vaishnavites and Shaivites who had often come into conflict in the South. Endowed with the immense powers of both the preserver and the destroyer gods, he embodies the power to protect.

The Ayyappa tradition incorporates Vavar as the inseparable companion of the god, thus symboling also a Hindu-Muslim rapprochement. The main Ayyappa temple at Sabarimalai, believed to have been originally constructed by Ayyappa's foster father on Ayyappa's instructions before the latter ascended to heaven, has a shrine for Vavar. All pilgrims, whether Hindu or Muslim, are supposed to carry an offering of pepper for Vavar along with other offerings for Ayyappa. The shrine is managed by Muslims who claim to be Vavar's descendants. Pepper perhaps commemorates the fact that Arab traders had come to the Malabar coast in search of pepper and other spices. Other Ayyappa temples elsewhere duplicate this pattern. Vavar is represented in his shrine not by an image but by a sword.

Vavar is a Robin Hood figure in the legend: "Since Vavar distributed the major portion of his plundered goods among his followers and the poor people, he had a large number of followers."⁴ Thus, he and Ayyappa, both benevolent protector figures, are suited to one another.

Vavar is also part of the ritual in other ways. There are several songs in his praise, and all-night dance dramas performed by devotees before they set out on pilgrimage, include a dance performed by two men, representing Ayyappa and Vavar. One carries a knife and the other a sickle. Ayyappa is said to have instructed his foster father to build the shrine for Vavar, saying: "Consider Vavar as myself."

This phrasing recalls Krishna's many statements in the Mahabharata, that juna is inseparable from himself. The Ayyappa Sewa Sangam, established about three decades ago to help the pilgrims, which has developed into a huge all-India organisation with 600 branches and conducts many activities, including maintenance of forty temples, holding conventions, working for Harijan welfare, running religious classes, and producing literature and music cassettes, claims that Vavar wanted to become a Hindu but Ayyappa told him not to.

Sabarimalai is a South Indian all-male pilgrimage to Ayyappan, a hyper-male deity born from two male gods plays a role in constructing male identities, at both external (social-structural) and internal (psychological) levels. The pilgrimage draws creatively on relationships between two South Asian male figures: renounce and householder, breaking down the opposition between transcendence and immanence to bring into everyday life a sense of transcendence specific to men.

Sabarimalai merges individual men both with the hyper-masculine deity and with a wider community of men: other male pilgrims, senior male gurus (teachers). This merger is both social and personal. A normal and universal sense of masculine ambivalence and self-doubt has a specific local-cultural resolution, when boys and men experience strengthening of the gendered ego through renunciatory self-immersion in a 'greater masculine'.

Lord Ayyappa The Pandya dynasty, which was ousted by Thirumala Naicker the ruler of the Pandya Empire spanning Madurai, Thiruvonamali and Ramanathapuram resided in places such as Valliyur, Tenkasi, Shengottah and Sivagiri. King Rakashekhra, which was the foster-father of Lord Ayyappa belong to this dynasty. Lord Ayyappa was the son of Vishnu & Shiva Lord Ayyappa is a very popular Hindu deity, which is mainly worshipped in South India. He is also spelt as Ayyappa. It is believed that he was born out of the union between Lord Shiva and the mythical Mohini, who is also regarded as an avatar of Lord Vishnu. Therefore, Ayyappa is also called as 'Hariharan Puthiran' which means the son of both Hari or Vishnu and 'Haran' or Shiva.

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Lord Ayyappa also called as Manikandan Maniknanadan is the another name of Ayyappa because, according to the legend of his birth, his parents tied a golden bell also called as mani around his neck (kandan) soon after his birth. As legendary, when Shiva and

Mohini abandoned the child on the banks of the Pampa River, the ruler of that dynasty, King Rajashekara, the childless monarch belonging to Pandalam, adopted Ayyappa and accepted him as the divine gift.

The Deification of Lord Ayyappa The king understood the queens' bad nature against his son and begged Manikantan's forgiveness. Then Manikantan left for the heavenly abode after telling the king to build a large temple at Sabari, so that the memories remain forever on the earth. The temple was constructed and Lord Parshuram sculpted the figure of Lord Ayyappa and installed it on the eve of Makar Sankranti. Thus in this way, Lord Ayyappa was defined.

King Rajasekara built the shrine and the sacred eighteen stairs leading to the temple complex was made. As he was in a dilemma for perplexing the task of placing Dharmasastha's idol in the temple for darshan, he was reminded the words of Lord himself. The River Pampa known as Ganga, Sabarimala as holy as Kasi – Dharmasastha sent Parshuram, who made the land of Kerala holy from the bottom of the ocean to the Sabarimalai and it was he who carved the figure of Lord Ayyappa.

The Worship of Lord Ayyappa Strict religious adherence was practised by Lord Ayyappa to receive his blessings by the devotees. First of all, the devotees observe a 41-day penance before visiting him in the temple. They should also avoid any physical abstinence from physical pleasures and other family ties and should live like a celibate or 'brahamachari'. They should also continuously practice the goodness of life.

Apart from the above, the devotees have to bathe in the holy river Pampa, and adorn themselves with three-eyed coconut and garland and then should bravely steep climb 18 stairs of Sabarimalai temple. The Famous Pilgrimage of Sabarimalai in Kerala is the most

famous Ayyappa shrine and is visited by over 50 million devotees every year. It is one of the most famous pilgrimages in the world. Pilgrims from around the country visit this place to get the blessings of Lord Ayyappa.

Ayyappan is a warrior deity. He is revered for his ascetic devotion to Dharma – the ethical and right way of living, to deploy his military genius and daring yogic war abilities to destroy those who are powerful but unethical, abusive and arbitrary. The most-public aspect of the worship of Ayyappan is the annual pilgrimage to Sabarimalai, in which only men, preadolescent girls, and postmenopausal women are allowed to participate. Prior to the journey, pilgrims are required to observe strict vows of celibacy and abstain from meat and intoxicants for a period of, traditionally, 41 days. Pilgrims climb barefoot to the hilltop where the shrine is located, and during the pilgrimage linguistic and economic differences among participants are minimized.

A late Sanskrit text describes Ayyappan as the son of Shiva and Vishnu (with the latter in his form as the enchantress Mohini). Abandoned by his parents with but a bell around his neck, he was adopted by a Pandalam king of Kerala, and, soon after, his divinity was recognized and a shrine erected to him. Other tales and songs in Malayalam and Kodagu describe his adoption by a local king. They focus on his later life, in which he grew to be a renowned warrior who first set out to defeat and was subsequently worshipped by the Muslim chieftain Vavar (to whom there is a shrine en route to Sabarimalai).

Lord Ayyappa is a very popular Hindu deity, who is mainly worshipped in South India. Ayyappa was born out of the union between God Shiva and Mohini, an avatar of Lord Vishnu. Ayyappa's birth story : Goddess Durga killed the demon Mahishasura, and

his sister, Mahishi set out to avenge her brother's death. Ayyappan, also called Sartavu or Śāsta, in Hinduism, a deity who is always celibate, generally depicted in a yogic posture, with a bell around his neck.

The shrine of Sabarimalai is an ancient temple. It is believed that the prince of the Pandalam dynasty, an avatar of Shasta, meditated at Sabarimalai temple and became one with the divine. The place where the prince meditated is the Manimandapam. In 1821, the kingdom of Pandalam was added to Travancore. In this shrine, also situated within a dense forest, Ayyappa is primarily a healer of snakebites who sits with theertham in one hand and bhasmam (sacred ash) in the other. Night or day, if anybody comes there with a snakebite, the priest has to open the sanctum sanctorum and apply ash on the wound.

The steps are believed to be special for other reasons too. For one, Ayyappa was a master of 18 weapons each step is dedicated to each of those weapons, which Ayyappa is believed to have finally surrendered at the “pathinettam padi” or the eighteenth step. Etymology. Erumely is the name extracted from Erumakolli ("killed the buffalo"). A myth tells that Lord Ayyappa killed "Mahishi" in this place on the way to collect a tiger's milk. Mahish means buffalo and "Eruma" in Malayalam and hence the name extract "erumakolli".

Another unique aspect of this temple is that it is not open throughout the year. It is open for worship only during the days of Mandalapooja, Makaravilakku, Vishu and also during the first day of every Malayalam month. It is said that the pilgrims have to observe celibacy for 41 days before going to Sabarimalai. Pandala's king brought a golden belt and tied it around the Lord's legs so that the Lord felt comfortable to sit in the position

and remained in the temple to bless the devotees forever. That's why we find the golden belt tied to the legs of Ayyappan.

Simple and pious living sans any vices are called for during the viratham period. Wearing the Mala denotes the onset of the viratham. Devotees consider wearing the Mala on a Saturday or on the day of Uthram, the astral sign considered auspicious. Uthram is the birth star of Sree Ayyappan. So, Lord Ayyappa promised to marry her the day kanni-swamis (new devotees) stop visiting him with their prayers at Sabarimalai. The woman agreed to wait for him at a neighbouring temple. The woman is also worshipped today as Malikapurathamma at a neighbouring temple. In the version of history that Sajeev puts forth, Ayyappa belonged to their community and lived in the 12th century.

Utram (Uttara Phalguni in Samskrutam) is the birth star (Janma Nakshtram) of Lord Ayyappa. Ayyappan, also called Hariharaputra, is believed to be born from the union of Shiva and Mohini. Due to evil manipulations of his step mother, he went to forest and killed demoness Mahishi and came to kingdom riding on tiger for giving milk of tiger to his step mother. After that he went to dense forest and disappeared. Upon the instructions of Ayyappa, King built temple for Ayyappa in Sabarimalai.

Hence, to remove Ayyappa from her son's path, the Queen sent him to the forest on the pretext of asking him to get a tigress' milk to cure herself of a mysterious disease. The doting son left for the wood to follow his mother's instructions, but on his way, he came across Mahishi, the demoness. Ayyappa agreed. Lord Indra turned into a mighty tiger for him to ride on. Many other devas also turned into tigers and followed him. News about Manikantan's return from the forest spread fast and the people of Pantalalam started

gathering to greet him. According to Hindu mythology Ayyappa meditated in Sabarimalai after killing the powerful demon Mahishi.

Restrictions are imposed on the entry of women in the age group of 10 to 50 years in the temple. Ayyappan temples typically show him as a celibate yogi. A few important temples such as the one at Achankovil Sree Dharmasastha Temple near Travancore, however, depict him as a married man with two wives Poorna and Pushkala, as well as a son Satyaka.

As the pilgrimage season has begun, devotees will be thronging Kerala's Sabarimalai temple to worship Lord Ayyappa. He was raised by King Rajashekhara of Pandalam and his wife. The world-famous shrine in Kerala's Sabarimalai is dedicated to the worship of Lord Ayyappa, who is also known as Manikandan/Manikanthan. The pilgrimage season has begun, and one will find thousands of devotees thronging the region to pay obeisance to the young boy, who chose to reside at the Sabarimalai.

The Devas had combined their powers to create Durga, who in turn killed Mahishasura for creating havoc. And to avenge the death of Mahishasura, Mahishi, his sister created ruckus in the universe. Once, while performing a penance, she pleased Brahma and was blessed with a boon which stated that only a child born to Shiva and Vishnu could kill her. Thus, Mahishi misused the blessing as she knew she had become invincible. But little did she know that the gods would outsmart her. Vishnu transformed into his Mohini avatar and united with Shiva to produce a child. And this child came to be known as HariHara Putra. Therefore, the main purpose of Ayyappa's birth was to eliminate Mahishi and help her attain Moksha.

King Rajashekhara of Pandalam and his wife were childless. One day, when the King visited the forest, he found an abandoned baby boy. The King took the baby to a sage who advised him to adopt it. Thus, the childless couple was blessed with a child, and he was raised like a prince. According to a legend, the Queen gave birth to a son, and soon after having a biological child, she started alienating Ayyappa. She was also against the King's decision to make Ayyappa his royal heir. Hence, to remove Ayyappa from her son's path, the Queen sent him to the forest on the pretext of asking him to get a tigress' milk to cure herself of a mysterious disease. The doting son left for the wood to follow his mother's instructions, but on his way, he came across Mahishi, the demoness. Thus, he served the main purpose of his birth by killing Mahishi.

The Queen wanted to eliminate Ayyappa, and she was confident that the tigers in the forest would kill him. But he returned to the kingdom mounted on a tigress and several tigers in tow. After seeing him at ease in the presence of ferocious animals, the King and the Queen realised that Manikanthan was no ordinary human. He proved that he was a doting son to his parents but chose to decline the offer of ruling the kingdom. Instead, he aimed an arrow at the Sabarimalai and decided to reside there. Some female Hindus believe that Ayyappan himself placed restrictions on women entering the temple because he wanted to be celibate, and the presence of women would distract him from this cause.

Simple and pious living sans any vices are called for during the viratham period. Wearing the Mala denotes the onset of the viratham. Devotees consider wearing the Mala on a Saturday or on the day of Uthram, the astral sign considered auspicious. Uthram is the birth star of Sree Ayyappan. The black clothes symbolically indicate a mind withdrawn from all materialist objects. The black cloth suggests the Ayyappa devotee is dead to the world of perceptions, emotions and thoughts and he is immersed in

thought of Ayyappa. Thus, Shani agreed that he would spare Ayyappa devotees from his cruel eyes. In return Lord Ayyappa assured that all his devotees would wear black dress which is the colour associated with Lord Shani. This is the reason why lord Ayyappa devotees wear black dress.

Majority of the pilgrims visiting the Sabarimalai Ayyappa temple wear black dress – black dhoti, trousers, shirt or T-shirt. Others opt for the saffron colored dress. Flowers / Plants for Lord Ayyappa Tulasi and Blue Shankupushpam are the favourite flowers of Lord Ayyappa. Alternatively, you may offer any fragrant flowers like Jasmine, Rose, and Marigold among others. Apart from that, you may also offer any blue and/or red coloured flowers. Over 100 temples in Kerala are dedicated to Ayyappan. Women are allowed to enter all other temples of Ayyappan, so some argue that making an exception for Sabarimalai is unusual and inconsistent. The chief minister of Kerala, Pinarayi Vijayan, is in favor of women's entry to Sabarimalai.

In case you are not able to visit the temple and remove the mala there you can remove the same through your mother in the house itself. You can perform srartham(thithi) for your father wearing the mala. It is auspicious only if your wife delivers a child during the vratha period when you are wearing the mala. The steps are believed to be special for other reasons too. For one, Ayyappa was a master of 18 weapons — each step is dedicated to each of those weapons, which Ayyappa is believed to have finally surrendered at the “pathinettam padi” or the eighteenth step. Their only wish: The cardamom seeds they pluck should be used in the preparation of Ayyappa's favorite dessert, `aravana'.

Religious practices mandate that the Mala should be accepted after prayers from a temple priest or a Guru Swami – a person who has completed 18 Sabarimalai pilgrimage. Alternatively, the Mala may be also worn in the prayer room/place of one's own home. The Mala may be taken off after the completion of the pilgrimage. Ayyappa's sitting posture is called Yoga asana, which is different from the posture of other idols. Yogasana is meditating. The lap is not kept free, like other Gods which has the worldly meaning of providing space to the consort. The left lap is considered to be the seat or place for wife / consort.

As he wears the holy mala around his neck, the pilgrim swears total allegiance to Lord Ayyappan with whom he identifies himself completely. He surrenders his thoughts, words and deeds to the powerful deity and begins to lead the austere life of an ascetic. You can keep Idols you want to worship at home, but make sure you avoid their Rudra or angry form or avatar as it is not auspicious. The Sabarimalai Temple follows a very strict dress code for men who wish to seek the blessings of the Lord. One must not wear any upper garment like shirts or vests. One must wear a black, orange, or dark blue dhoti to view the Lord. Ladies between the ages of 10 – 55 are not allowed to visit Sabarimalai.

The devotee may wear a bead chain with the locket of Sree Ayyappan. Once the chain is worn, the devotee has to lead a life free of worldly pleasures. Vices such as smoking and alcohol use are also a strict no-no. The pilgrim is also required to lead a life of conjugal abstinence. There is no harm wearing foot wear(slippers/shoe) taking into consideration your health conditions during Sabarimalai yatra. The Irumudi once used can be used again. Wearing the garland on a Saturday or on the day of asterism of Uthram, just prior to the first day of Vrishchikam is considered auspicious, for it is held

that Dharma Shastha or Lord Ayyappan was born on first Vrishchikam on a Saturday, the asterism being Uthram.

A pilgrimage to Sabarimalai is all about the test of senses. Pilgrims are expected to lead a simple pious life known as ‘Vrutham’ for the successful completion of the pilgrimage.

Ideally, ‘Vrutham’ starts from the day when the pilgrim adorns a chain (Mala in Malayalam) denoting willingness to undertake austerity. This ritual is known as ‘Malayideel’ in local parlance.

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Simple and pious living sans any vices is called for during the ‘Vrutham’ period. Wearing the Mala denotes the onset of the ‘Vrutham’. Devotees consider wearing the Mala on a Saturday or on the day of Uthram, the astral sign considered auspicious. Uthram is the birth star of Sree Ayyappan.

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The idea behind the 41-day 'Vrutham' is to develop discipline and healthy practices and make it a habit. It is all about good habit formation through sustained efforts achieved through a combination of self-control and prayers.

Black is the recommended colour for clothes during the 'Vrutham' period as the colour denotes detachment from material things. Cutting hair, shaving off facial hair, and cutting nails are forbidden.

This ritual is the preparation and packing of 'Irumudi kettu' for Sabarimalai pilgrimage. It is prepared under the guidance of a guru swamy. Only those who carry the Irumudi kettu on the head would be allowed to climb the 18 sacred steps to the temple, as

they are the ones considered to have observed the austerities and thus eligible to climb the holy steps.

Other devotees have to resort to a different passage to reach in front of the sanctum sanctorum for worship. During the Kettunira, after the initial prayers, the sacred offering of ghee (clarified cow's butter) is filled inside a coconut, the fibrous covering of which is removed.

The draining of the water within the coconut through a small hole on the top and filling it with ghee is a symbolic act. It signifies the draining out of worldly attachments from the mind and filling it with spiritual aspirations. Coconut is called 'thenga' in Malayalam and now the ghee-filled coconut, an offering for Lord Ayyappa, is known as the neyy-thenga.

First, the front compartment of the bag will be filled in with the neyy-thenga and other sacred offerings to Lord Ayyappa and the accompanying deities. The front compartment is now closed by tying it with a string. The filled in front compartment is believed to be vibrant with spiritual power. Then the other compartment is filled with a few coconuts to be broken at various holy spots. Petta Thullal, the ritualistic sacred dance to celebrate the victory of good over evil in the legend of Lord

Ayyappa who killed the demon princess Mahishi, which denotes the beginning of the last leg of the annual Sabarimalai pilgrimage season. Traditionally, Petta Thullal is performed first by the Ambalappuzha team. The team comprising more than 1,000 devotees starts the ritualistic dance after sighting the kite in the skies around noon from the Kochambalam at Petta junction. The team will dance its way into the Nainar mosque across the road to pay obeisance to Lord Ayyappa's trusted lieutenant, Vavar.

They will be formally received by the Erumeli Mahallu Jamaat committee leaders who later would accompany them to the Sree Dharma Sastha Temple (Valiambalam) nearly a kilometre away where the Ambalappuzha team and the Jamaat leaders would be received by the Travancore Devaswom Board officials. The ceremonial dance by the Alangad team begins in the afternoon after sighting the star in the daylight sky. The two teams after an overnight stay at the Valiambalam would trek to Pampa to participate in the Pampa Sadya and later in the Makaravilaku festival at the Sannidhanam.

There are several routes to reach Sabarimalai including Erumeli route, Vandiperiyar route and the Chalakayam route. The route via Erumeli is considered the traditional path as it is held that Ayyappan took this route to subdue Mahishi. It is also the toughest of the lot, requiring a trek of about 61 km through forest and hill tracks. Devotees taking the Erumeli route pass through a series of spots before they reach Sabarimalai. The journey starts with offering prayers at the shrines of Dharma Sastha and Vavar Swami at Erumeli.

About 4 km from Erumeli is Perur Thodu, a place where Ayyappa is believed to have rested during his expedition. This place is also important as it marks the start of the ascent/climb to Sabarimalai. As a practice, pilgrims give alms seeking asylum in Ayyappa. The forest beyond Perur Thodu is known as 'Poongavanam' meaning 'Ayyappa's garden.

The next spot in the traditional path is Kaalaketti, about 10 km from Perur Thodu. 'Kaala' in Malayalam means ox and 'ketti' is tying. It is believed that Lord Shiva tied his ox here and witnessed Ayyappa slaying the Mahishi. Pilgrims offer prayers in the shrine here, lighting camphor and breaking coconuts.

About 2 km from Kaalaketti is Azhutha river, a tributary of the river Pampa. Pilgrims make it a point to collect pebbles from the Azhutha river before proceeding on to the steep

Azhutha hill. The 2-km steep hilly terrain is considered very tough, making one weep and cry. Kallidumkundu rests at the summit of Azhutha. At this step pilgrims throw the pebbles down, commemorating the act of flinging down Mahishi's mortal remains.

Inchipparakota marks the descent of journey after successfully navigating the uphill terrain. At Inchipparakota, there is a shrine dedicated to Sastha known as Kotayil Sastha, where pilgrims offer their respects. The descent across the slippery path ends at Karimala thodu (canal) flanked by the Azhutha hill on one side and the Karimala hill on the other.

Karimala is the grooming ground of elephants and the pachyderms visit the Karimala canal to drink water. To protect themselves from the chilly weather and animal invasion, pilgrims set up campfires. Karimala is a hill with seven levels and the journey is undertaken in stages. The 5 km ascent is very difficult and devotees course this leg of journey chanting 'Swamiye Saranam Ayyappa'. The flat terrain on top of the Karimala hill offers scope for rest. The 'Nazhikkinar', well within a well in this place has fresh spring water, quenching thirsts and tiredness after the steep climb. At this spot prayers are offered to various deities including 'Karimalanthan', 'Kochu Kadutha Swami' and Bhagawathi.

After an exhausting descent of 5 km covering spots such as Valiyaanavattam and Cheriyaanavattam, one reaches the Pampa River. The significance of Pampa in the Sabarimalai pilgrimage also draws from the belief that King Rajasekhara of Pandalam found infant Ayyappa here. Considered as holy as the Ganges, worshippers believe that the water purifies one from curse and evil.

The Sannidhanam (the spot of the sanctum sanctorum) is around 8 km from the Pampa River valley. Neelimala, Appachimedu, Sabareepedom and Saramkuthi are some of the spots en route. It is interesting to note that ascent and descents of the journey teach one to

recognise that life is all about ups and downs, and one has to brave it all to reach the summit!

Ulsavam' is the annual festival held at Sabarimalai temple during the Malayalam month of 'Meenam' or the Tamil month of 'Panguni' (March-April). The temple remains open for a period of 10 days during the 'Ulsavam'. Ulsavam' begins with the hoisting of the temple flag, 'Kodiyettam'. Over the course of the next days, several special poojas including 'Ulsavabali' and 'Sree Bhootha Bali' are conducted.

The 9th day of the annual festival marks 'Pallivetta', wherein Sree Ayyappa goes on a ceremonial procession to perform the royal hunt at Saramkuthi. This is followed by the Sabarimalai 'Arattu' or holy dip at the Pampa River. Special poojas to mark 'Panguni Uthram' draws the annual 'Ulsavam' to a close. 'Uthram' is the birth star of Sree Ayyappan.

No shaving is allowed and the devotee prays to Dharma Shastha by chanting his name at least 108 times. He refrains from hurting anybody either physically or verbally and identifies other Ayyappa devotees with the Lord himself. The day of Mandala Puja marks the end of the 41 days long austerity known as Mandala Kalam that is observed by the followers or devotees of Lord Ayyappa.

The 41 days fast begins on the first day of Vrishchik Masam which is starting from and it will end on twelfth day of Dhanu Masam. Always enter the temple by placing your right foot first. Ladies are requested not to enter the temple wearing Nighties / Middies. Gents are requested not to enter the temple wearing Lungies, Bermudas, Socks and Caps. Ladies should avoid visiting the temple for specific number of days when they are forbidden.

In case you are not able to visit the temple and remove the mala there you can remove the same through your mother in the house itself. You can perform srartham (thithi) for your father wearing the mala. It is auspicious only if your wife delivers a child during the vratha period when you are wearing the mala.

The members of Pandya dynasty ousted by Thirumala Naicker the ruler of the erstwhile Pandya Empire spanning Madurai, Thirunelveli and Ramanathapuram lived in places like Valliyur, Tenkasi, Shengottah, Achankovil and Sivagiri. They had also established their supremacy in parts of Travancore, and some of them belonging to Chempazhanattu Kovil in Sivagiri were given the right to rule the country of Pandalam by the King of Travancore, some eight hundred years ago.

King Rajashekara, the foster-father of Lord Ayyappan belonged to this dynasty. A just and precocious sovereign King Rajashekara was held by his subjects in high esteem. Under him, the region was witnessing a golden age. But the king had one sorrow he was childless and thus had no heir to inherit his throne. Both the hapless king and his queen prayed ceaselessly to Lord Shiva for a child.

Around the same time, a demon by the name of Mahishasura undertook severe penance (tapas) and consequently Lord Brahma was forced to grant his wish that nobody on earth could annihilate him. Emboldened by Brahma's boon, Mahishasura commenced systematic destruction of people and pulverized tribes and communities. Terrorised and fearing his wrath, people fled to distant lands. Realizing that only a superhuman power could exterminate the wayward Mahishasura, the devas appealed to Goddess Durga, who killed him in a bloody battle.

Determined to avenge her slain brother, Mahishi, the sister of Mahishasura secured a boon from Lord Brahma that no being except the offspring of Vishnu (Hari) & Shiva (Haran) could slay her. In due course of time, Mahishi went to Devaloka and began harassing the Devas who in turn implored Lord Vishnu to intervene.

As the boon was that nobody except the son of Lord Shiva & Vishnu could kill Mahishi, Lord Vishnu assumed the female persona of Mohini who helped devas prize Amrit away from asuras; it was decided that the male child born out of the union of Mohini and Lord Shiva would be placed under the care of Lord Shiva's childless devotee, King Rajashekhara of Pandalam.

The steps are believed to be special for other reasons too. For one, Ayyappa was a master of 18 weapons each step is dedicated to each of those weapons, which Ayyappa is believed to have finally surrendered at the "pathinettam padi" or the eighteenth step. The worship of Lord Ayyappa enunciates the great Advaita principle of Tat Tvam Asi meaning Thou art That or That is You. It means you are part of the Universal Soul (Paramatma). It also means that for reaching the Paramatma or Universal Soul you search in yourself the Jeevatma (Life soul present in you).

The Ayyappa Gayatri Mantra helps one to attain peace and divine life. Reciting this mantra also helps one to be released from bondage and whatever sin one has done. Praying to Lord Ayyappa also blesses one with the ability to absorb lots of worldly knowledge and good memory. Lord Ayyappa is a symbol of religious unity and communal harmony.

He is the presiding deity of Sabarimalai temple. He came down to earth to free his devotees from the clutches of demon Mahishi. Lord Ayyappa enshrined in the Sabarimalai temple combines both these aspects of Brahman. The 18 steps have considerable religious significance. Devotees believe that ascending these steps helps detach them from worldly desires mentally and physically. The first five steps are called panchedriya.

They symbolise the five human senses of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. Next come the eight steps of the ashtaragas. These signify emotions: Krodh (anger), kama (love), lobh (greed), moh (lust), asooya (jealousy), dhoombh (boastfulness), madha (unhealthy competition) and malsarya (pride). It is believed that climbing up the steps while chanting helps control emotions that cause pain in the world.

The trigunas, the next three steps, stand for three human qualities, satva (goodness or purity), rajas (passion) and tamas (inertia or dullness). The last two represent vidya (knowledge) and its opposite, avidya (ignorance). The steps were originally of granite, but later covered with panchaloha, a special mixture of gold, silver, copper, iron and tin. The steps are believed to be special for other reasons too. For one, Ayyappa was a master of 18 weapons each step is dedicated to each of those weapons, which Ayyappa is believed to have finally surrendered at the “pathinettam padi” or the eighteenth step. Some also believe that the steps represent the 18 hills around Sabarimalai, of which the highest is the one the temple stands on.

The historic Kurukshethra war in Mahabharata lasted for eighteen days and it had eighteen Akshauhini armies. Mahabharatham has eighteen parvas. The Bhagavad Gita

and Vedas have eighteen chapters. Sabarimalai temple is surrounded by eighteen hills and it has eighteen steps. he climbs has rules: Every devotee must begin it with their right foot. Only those who have undertaken the 41-day vratham - which involves abstinence from all worldly pleasures are allowed to ascend the 18 holy steps.

Visual (Eye), Auditory (Ears), Olfactory (Nose), Gustatory (Tongue), Tactile (Skin), The next eight steps symbolise the eight Ashtaragas, Kama (Love), Krodha (Anger), Lobha (Avarice). Pandala's king brought a golden belt and tied it around the Lord's legs so that the Lord felt comfortable to sit in the position and remained in the temple to bless the devotees forever. That's why we find the golden belt tied to the legs of Ayyappan.

As millions of pilgrims have already started their fasting rituals (Vratham) to visit the majestic temple of Sabarimalai that is known for its divinity. This time around, Astro Ulagam will be covering an interesting topic about the prominent pilgrim which is '18 steps' of Sabarimalai temple. Symbolically called as 'Ponnu Pathinettampadi', the 18 steps of Sabarimalai Ayyappa temple lead to the sanctum sanctorum of the majestic temple which is believed to be an inalienable part of the darshan. There are several myths related to the significance of 18 steps in the pilgrimage to Sabarimalai and you would be surprised the moment you know the interesting facts of the holy steps. Without further delay, let us briefly explain some of the interesting facts about the 18 steps (Pathinettampadi) of Sabarimalai Temple that you probably didn't know.

As per the mythology and elderly people, Lord Ayyappa devotees who visit the Sabarimalai shrine have to climb up 18 steps to the sanctum sanctorum, all the while

chanting the Pathinettampadi (song of the 18 steps). The steps were originally covered with granite, but now they are covered with 'Panchaloham' (A Special Composition of gold, silver, copper, iron and tin) to prevent it from deterioration.

The climb has rules: Every devotee must begin it with their right foot. Only those who have undertaken the 41-day vratham which involves abstinence from all worldly pleasures are allowed to ascend the 18 holy steps. On their way to the temple, Ayyappa devotees must carry the 'irumudi', a small black cloth bundle that consists of puja items or personal possessions like a change of clothes and eat something light such as dry fruits.

The first five steps symbolise the five human senses (Panchendriyas)- Visual (Eye), Auditory (Ears), Olfactory (Nose), Gustatory (Tongue), and Tactile (Skin). The following eight steps symbolise the eight Ashtaragas- Kama (Love), Krodha (Anger), Lobha (Avarice), Moha (Lust), Madha (Pride), Maltsarya (Unhealthy Competition), Asooya (Jealous), Dhumb (Boastfulness).

The next three steps stand for three Gunas or Thrigunas (Nature-born qualities)- Satva (Perspicuity, Discernment), Rajas (Activity, Enjoyment), Thamas (Inactivity, Stupor). The last two steps represent- Vidya (Knowledge), Avidya (Ignorance). On the other hand, some believe that Ayyappa has mastered 18 weapons, and each step equated to a weapon. It is believed that Ayyappa finally surrendered at the 'Pathinettam padi' or the eighteenth step. Perhaps, some also believe that the steps represent the 18 hills around Sabarimalai, which is known as the highest temple stand on the hillside. Though there are several reasons for the significance of 'Pathinettam padi', the main highlight is the number '18'.

"Ayyappa" redirects here. For other uses, see Ayyappa (disambiguation).Ayyappan, also called Dharmasastha and Manikandan, is a Hindu deity popular in Southern India. He is considered to be the epitome of dharma, truth, and righteousness and is often called upon to obliterate evil. Although devotion to Ayyappan has been prevalent earlier in South India, his popularity rose only in the late 20th century.

According to Hindu theology, he is the son of Harihara (Vishnu in the form of Mohini, and Shiva). Ayyappan is also referred to as Ayyappa, Sastavu, Hariharasudhan, Manikandan, Shasta or Dharma Shasta and Sabarinath. The iconography of Ayyappan depicts him as a handsome celibate (Brahmachari) deity doing yoga and as an epitome of Dharma, who wears a bell around his neck. In the Hindu tradition popular in the Western Ghats of India, he was born with the powers of Shiva and Vishnu to confront and defeat the shape-shifting evil Buffalo demoness Mahishi.

He was raised by a childless royal couple Rajashekara pandiyan and Koperundevi, and grows up as a warrior yogi champion of ethical and dharmic living. In South Indian portrayals, Ayyappan images show him riding a tigress, but in some places such as Sri Lanka he is shown as riding a white elephant. Ayyappan's popularity has grown in many parts of India, and the most prominent Ayyappan shrine is at Sabarimalai, nestled in the hills of Pathanamthitta of Kerala.

The shrine receives millions of pilgrims every year in late December and early January, many of whom prepare for weeks before and then climb the hill barefoot making it one of the largest active pilgrimage sites in the world. The pilgrimage attracts a wide range of devotees, from diverse social or economic backgrounds, except women in their fertile age because Ayyappan is believed to be a celibate deity. He remains one of the few

deities in Hindu tradition, who is respected by other religious communities, including Muslims and Christians in Kerala.^[2] The most significant festival linked to him is the Makaravilakku (Makara Sankranti), observed around the winter solstice.

The name Ayyappan (sometimes spelled as Ayyappa or Ayyappan) may be related to as "Lord Father". The name may literally come from "Ayyan" and "Appan" both meaning "Father". The root names "Ayyan" and "Appan" denotes Mohini (Mohini here called father, she is a female form of the god Vishnu) and Shiva respectively. However, the word Ayyappan is not found in South Indian versions of the medieval era Puranas, leading scholars to the hypothesis that Ayyappan may have roots elsewhere.

The alternate theory links it to the Malayali word acchan and Tamil word appa which means "father", with Ayyappan connoting "Lord-father. The alternate proposal is supported by the alternate name for Ayyappan being Sastava (Sasta, Sashta, Sastra), a Vedic term that also means "Teacher, Guide, Lord, Ruler". The words Sastha and Dharmasastha in the sense of a Hindu god are found in the Puranas. Ayyappan is also known as Hariharasudhan meaning the "son of Harihara" or a fusion deity of Hari and Hara, the names given to Vishnu and Shiva respectively.

He is also called Manikanta from Mani, Sanskrit for precious stone and kanta, Sanskrit for neck. In some regions, Ayyappa and Ayyanar are considered to be the same deity given their similar origin. Others consider him as different because their worship methods are not the same. Ayyappan is a warrior deity. He is revered for his ascetic devotion to Dharma the ethical and right way of living, to deploy his military genius and daring yogic war abilities to destroy those who are powerful but unethical, abusive and arbitrary.

His iconography is usually shown with a bow and arrow upraised in his left hand, while in his right he holds either a bow or a sword diagonally across his left thigh. Other depictions of Ayyappan, particularly paintings, generally show him in a yogic posture wearing a bell around his neck and sometimes shown riding a tiger.

The legends and mythology of Ayyappa varies across region like other Hindu gods and goddesses, reflecting a tradition that evolved and enriched over time, sometimes in conflicting ways. For example, the Sribhutanatha Purana text presents Ayyappan as an incarnation of the Hindu deity Hariharaputra, the son of Shiva and Mohini. This interaction between Shiva and Mohini is mentioned in the Bhagavata Purana, but Ayyappan is not mentioned.

In the oral tradition as represented by Malayalam folk songs, Ayyappa is presented as a warrior hero of Pandala kingdom. According to Eliza Kent, the legends in the Ayyappa tradition seem to be "artificially mixed and assembled into a kind of collage". Ruth Vanita suggests that Ayyappan probably emerged from the fusion of a Dravidian God of tribal provenance and the Puranic story of Shiva and Mohini's interaction.

Ayyappan has roots in Kerala, but his influence and popularity have grown among the Hindus in South Indian states. Of his many temples, the most significant is at Sabarimalai (also spelled Sabarimalai), set in the forests of the Pathanamthitta district in the Western Ghats on the banks of river Pamba, southeast of Kottayam. It is a major pilgrimage, attracting millions of Hindus every year, particularly of Malayali, Tamil, Kannada and Telugu heritage. Many begin preparations months in advance by leading a simple life, doing yoga, abstaining from eating a vegetarian diet or partially fasting,

wearing black or blue or sadhu-style dress for forty-one days, then trekking as a group to the shrine. These 41 days of rituals are termed as Vrutham and before beginning

His temples are typically found on hilltops, indicating that he is associated with Shiva, who also lives in a mountainous region. Currently, Kumaraswami is not as well-known as Ganesha. His association with Swami Ayyappa, however, has greatly expanded his fame in recent years. The group does not recognize any form of social or economic discrimination such as caste, and all devotees form a fraternity welcoming each other as equals.

The pilgrims call each other by the same name during the trek: swami. After their long walk covering about 18 miles, they bathe in the Pamba river, then they climb 18 steps at the Sabarimalai shrine, each representing a dharmic value (ethics, or interiorized gods). The shrine priests and devotees bring flowers from all over the Western Ghats and scatter them near the shrine, all the while chanting shlokas.

He is also revered by Muslims in Kerala due to his friendship with Vavar, who is identified as a Muslim brigand in local versions of the Ayyappan myth. In this mythology, Ayyappan confronts the plunder-driven pirate robber Vavar in the jungle on his way to collect tigress milk. They fight. Ayyappan defeats Vavar, and Vavar changes his way, becomes Ayyappan's trusted lieutenant helping fight other pirates and robbers. In another version, Vavar is stated to be a Muslim saint from Arabia, who works with Ayyappan.

Lord Ayyappa is worshipped mainly by Keralites but a large number of other South Indians - Tamilians, Kannadigas and Andhrites visit and follow the traditions of Sabarimalai which is near Pampa in Kerala where the Lords Temple is located. So,

Ayyappa is a South Indian God rather than a Tamil God or Kerala God. Lord Guruvayurappan is Lord Krishna as worshipped in Guruvayur. He is known as Guruvayurappan only by Malayali's or Palghat Iyers. Apart from Brahmins, very few Tamilians visit the Guruvayur Temple. So, Guruvayurappan can be called a Kerala God (Only the name Guruvayurappan - not Lord Krishna)

His temples are typically found on hilltops, indicating that he is associated with Shiva, who also lives in a mountainous region. Currently, Kumaraswami is not as well-known as Ganesha. His association with Swami Ayyappa, however, has greatly expanded his fame in recent years. On top of a hill in Sabarimalai, Kerala, there is a well-known temple that is home to the revered god Swami Ayyappa. Every year during the winter, he receives countless adoring visitors.

Devotees go through a lot of austerities and observations to see this god. They journey through a dense forest carrying their sparse belongings while singing the name of Ayyappa the entire route. They dress in all-black, practise extreme austerities for 40 days, and take a vow of celibacy. His original name, according to folklore, was Manikanthan. Vishnu and Shiva's combined strength produced him. Because of this, he is also known as Hariharaputra.

The son of Hari and Hari Hara, Mahisha was a demon who was the wife of Mahishasura, who goddess Durga previously killed. After her husband's death, Mahisha cried out for revenge and began causing a lot of trouble for the gods. Shiva and Vishnu both made the decision to create Manikanthan and defeat this demon. Manikanthan was raised by a monarch named Rajasekharan as his own son after being created.

Manikanthan killed the demon when he was twelve years old, and after instructing his father to erect a temple in his honour atop the hill, he vanished. Today, people know this temple as the Sabarimalai Ayyappa Temple. He is widely regarded as being an embodiment of Kumaraswami.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

Lord Shiva saw Lord Vishnu who was in the avatar of Mohini. He got attracted with the beauty of Mohini, and there happened the union of Lord Shiva and Mohini (Lord Vishnu), out of which a male child was born to them. He was named Dharma Saastha who was growing up in Kailash, the abode of Lord Shiva. He was also called Hariharan as he was born to Hari (Vishnu) and Hara (Shiva). During the Pandya dynasty, while the Pandyas were ruling parts of Kerala apart from Tamil Nadu, the descendants of the dynasty were given the rights to rule the country of Pandalam.

One such king called Rajasekara, who was the direct descendant of the Pandya dynasty was ruling Pandalam region. King Rajasekara was very successful as a king, keeping his kingdom prosperous. The king had only one worry in life that he had no children to take up the responsibility after his tenure. The king and the queen prayed Lord Shiva for blessing them with a child. Lord Shiva decided to answer their prayers through Dharmasaastha. He directed Dharmasaastha to be born as a baby and grow up in Pandalam. Lord Shiva along with Mohini left the baby in the dense forests on the banks of River Pampa, which was in Pandalam territory of Rajasekara.

One day, while Rajasekara went for hunting, he was resting in a place after a tiresome hunt. He heard a noise of a baby crying. He went around and saw a beautiful male baby left alone in the forest. He was astonished to see the baby with a golden bell tied around the neck. While he was confused on what to do with the baby, a sage who was passing by told him that the baby is so divine and reminded the king of his prayers to

Lord Shiva for blessing him with a baby. He also said that the baby is not a normal human being and an avatar of God himself.

As there was a bell tied around the neck, the sage named the baby “Manikandan” (Mani means bell and Kanda means neck in Tamil) and advised the king to take the baby to the palace and bring him up. He also told that the king would realize the purpose of the boy’s birth when He turns 12. The king was too happy and took the baby to the palace and brought him up. The queen and everyone in the kingdom were very happy that the king now had an heir to succeed. There was a Diwan (minister) in the kingdom, who was planning to take over the rule as the king didn’t have a successor, now got worried.

As the child grew up the king sent him to Gurukulam, where he learnt various arts and excelled. Everyone was surprised to see Manikandan being the best among others, with his brilliance and divinity. After completing his studies from his Guru, Manikandan wanted to offer Guru Dhakshina to him. Guru said that his only worry was about his son, who was dumb. Manikandan made him speak instantly. Guru was too happy about his son who got back his speech and to see the divine powers of Manikandan. Few years later, the queen gave birth to another male child. They named him Raja Rajan. Both the sons grew up happily. One day king Rajasekara decided that the time has come to crown Manikandan as his successor, as he was the eldest. He ordered the Diwan to make necessary arrangements. But the Diwan was not for it as he already had a grudge against Manikandan. He went to the queen and spoiled her mind and made her go against the king’s decision. He told the queen that only Raja Rajan is qualified to be a successor, as he was actually born to them. The queen took his words and started believing him. He

also told that he will take care of elimination of Manikandan, so that the queen won't be blamed. He told the queen to act as if she had a severe stomach pain.

The queen followed his words and started acting as if she suffered an intolerable stomach pain. Diwan arranged for a doctor who told the king that, the only medicine for queen's pain is the Tigress' milk. While the king was planning to send his men for it, Manikandan volunteered to go to the forest and fetch the tigress' milk, for which the king refused, as Manikandan was proposed to be crowned. But Manikandan insisted and made the king to accept him go. Manikandan went alone into the forests to fetch milk from tigress. He carried a bag on his head containing necessary food etc., during his search in the forest. On his way, he realized the purpose of his incarnation on earth. As Mahishi had a boon that she can only be killed by a son born to Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu, Ayyappan realized his duty to save Devas from Mahishi.

By then Mahishi was at her peak in devastating Devas and their places. Manikandan on his way to forest pulled her for a fight and waged a strenuous battle with her. Knowing this, Lord Shiva came down to earth along with Parvathi Devi on His Rishaba Vaahana (Ox – His carrier). He tied the Ox in a nearby tree in the forest and watched Manikandan fighting with Mahishi. The place where he tied the Ox is called as Kaalaikatti (Kaalai means Ox and Katti means tying) which is on the banks of River Azhudha, on the way to Sabarimalai. There is a Shiva temple now at Kaalaikatti.

Manikandan defeated Mahishi and threw her on the ground. Doubting that she may come alive again, Manikandan threw huge stones on her to ensure that she can't come up again. This place is called Kallidum Kunru on the Azhudha hill, where even today, pilgrims pick up a stone from Azhudha River and throw it in this place marking

Mahishi's defeat. Once Mahishi died, Manikandan blessed her to reach heaven. Mahishi who got relieved of some past curse with an opportunity to die from the hands of God Himself, prayed Manikandan to marry her. But He refused saying that, his birth on earth had a different purpose and he was meant to live as a Brahmachari throughout. But as Mahishi insisted, Manikandan told her that she can take abode in the same forest meant for him and assured her that whenever there is no new devotee coming to see Him, He would marry her.

From then Mahishi took abode just near the Sannidhanam with the name Maligapurathamma. Till today, she is eagerly waiting to see that no new devotee is visiting Ayyappan, but in vain. Because, every year, thousands of first timers (called Kanni Samis) visit Sabarimalai. To mark their visit, they bring a sharp bamboo stick called Saram and fix it on a tree at a place called Saram Kuthi. It is believed that when there is no "Saram" fixed on the tree, Lord Ayyappa would marry her, which never happened. On seeing Manikandan killing Mahishi, Lord Shiva and all Devas were too happy and showered him with praises. Lord Indra, along with all Devas volunteered to become tigers and tigresses and accompanied Manikandan back to the kingdom. Manikandan entered the palace sitting on a tiger, followed by a huge group of tigresses. The entire Pandalam and Palace was shocked to see this happening. Everyone started running for life on seeing this.

Rajasekara realized that Manikandan was not an ordinary child. As told by the sage in the forest that Manikandan's intent of birth would be known at his age of 12, Manikandan had reached the age of 12 by then. The queen and diwan fell at Manikandan's feet for His pardon. But Manikandan said it's not their mistake and

everything happened for a cause, with God's blessings. King Rajasekara apologized with Manikandan and requested him to take up the throne which was his dream of life. Manikandan politely refused and said that, becoming a king was not the purpose of his birth. He said His duty on earth is over and wanted to perform penance to reach back to Kailash.

King Rajasekara told Manikandan that he wished to construct a temple for Him, in a place wherever He chooses. Manikandan took his bow and shot an arrow, saying that he would be on thapas in the place where the arrow falls. The arrow went and fell at this place called Sabarimalai, which was already a holy place, where an old lady called Sabari, a devotee of Rama lived. She always chanted on Rama and wanted to meet Him at least once in her life time. Rama met her in this place and accepted her hospitality. As Sabari lived in this hilly forest, it was called Sabarimalai.

Manikandan said that he would be meditating in Sabarimalai and would be called as Ayyappan by his devotees. He also said that whoever visits him has to undergo a severe Brahmacharya Vratam (fast) and must abstain from worldly pleasures for 41 days before coming to Sabarimala. He would be blessing the devotees from Sabarimala near the river Pampa, which is as sacred as River Ganga.

Rajasekara who was eager to see Ayyappan as a king, felt very sad to see him as a Sanyasi with saffron clothes. Ayyappan granted a boon to Rajasekara that, every year on Makara Sankaranthi day, He would give Dharshan to the world as a king, with all costumes and weapons, a king would adorn. He also said that He would give appear in the form of a Jyothi (light) on that day, which happens till today on every Sankaranthi. After this, Manikandan proceeded to Sabarimala on his celestial journey.

Later, king Rajasekara, as per advice of Sage Agasthiyar, laid the foundation for constructing the shrine for Ayyappan in the said place. When king Rajasekara didn't know how to personify the image of Ayyappan in the temple, Sage Parasurama came to his help, carved the image of Lord Ayyappan and installed it on the day of Makara Sankaranthi.

The temple shall be reached by walk either from Erumeli or from Pampa. The trek from Erumeli (called Peruvazhi) is strenuous and about 48 kms (approx.) by walk. The route from Pampa is about 6 kms which is shorter but steeper too. People also take another route to reach the temple which is called Pul Medu (meaning Grass Hills). The temple (Sannidhanam) is located amidst a serene beauty of nature, surrounded by hilly forests. One has to climb 18 steps to reach the sanctum. It is believed that the holy 18 steps denote 5 Indriyas (senses), 8 Ragas, 3 Gunas (characters), Vidya and Avidya. It denotes that once a person crosses these 18 stages, he can reach the supreme God.

Devotees undergo severe austerities during 41 days fasting and start their pilgrimage to Sabarimalai. One has to carry the Irumudi (a bag containing 2 portions) on his head throughout the journey. In the front portion, the Ghee is carried inside a 3 eyed coconut for Abhishegam to the Lord. The back portion contain the food stuff is carried for cooking in the forest, as one won't get any food in the forest. When one reaches the Sannidhanam, the back portion would be empty and the front portion containing Ghee is offered to the Lord. It signifies that, only when we reduce all our sins and worldly pleasures, we can reach the Almighty. Devotees break a coconut in front of these 18 steps (Pathinettaampadi) before ascending. People without Irumudi are not permitted to climb the holy steps.

On Sankaranthi day, the jewels, clothing and weapons which from the Pandalam Palace is brought to Sabarimalai to be adorned by the Lord. This entire Jewel box (called Thiruvaabaranam) is carried by the persons or their representatives belonging to the Pandalam King's family ancestrally, who walk down all the way from Pandalam to Sabarimalai. The Thiruvaabaranam is kept at a Sri Parthasarathy Swamy Temple at Aranmula, as a ritual, on the way to Sabarimala. A Brahman Kite (Garuda) accompanies Thiruvaabaranam right from Pandalam till Sabarimala.

Sankaranthi is the only day, where one can have dharshan of the God dressed up like a king. For the rest of the year, God gives dharshan here as a Sanyasi wearing Saffron clothing and a garland made of Thulsi beads with the bell tied around his neck. On Makara Sankarandhi day, a star appears on the sky at a particular time in the evening, after which a light, Makara Jyothi appears for a while, amidst the adjoining hill called Ponnambala Medu. Lakhs of devotees excitingly witness this rare event every year, chanting "Swamiye Saranam Ayyappa".

There is a separate shrine for Sri Vavar near the Sannidhanam which is called Vavaru Nada. Vavar is a Muslim friend of Lord Ayyappa who was a bandit in the forest. Vavar first had a fight with Ayyappa on his way to Sabarimalai. Later knowing the powers of the Lord, he surrendered to him. Ayyappan accepted him as his best friend, who accompanied and helped Ayyappan throughout his way to Sabarimalai. One can see a Muslim priest here blessing the devotees. Thus, Sabarimalai marks the Hindu – Muslim unity. A Muslim shrine inside a Hindu temple is a rare sight which is not seen anywhere else in the world.

Even these days, people who start their trek from Erumeli, visit Vavar's Mosque situated opposite Dharmasastha temple to seek his blessings and guidance throughout the hilly forests. Other deities of the temple are Sri Ganapathy, Naagar, Maaligapurathamman, Nava graham, Kochu Kadutha Swamy and Valiya Kadutha Swamy. The temple attracts crores of devotees every year and it has the record of being the world's second largest annual pilgrimage, next to Haj. A must visit temple at least once in the life time. There are also few other mythologies and history connected to this temple. I have narrated the above, with what is widely told and believed by many, for generations. Your valuable comments are invited.

Sabarimalai is a prominent Hindu temple located on a hilltop in Kerala's Pathanamthitta district. It is surrounded by 18 hills in the Periyar Tiger Reserve. The temple is dedicated to Ayyappa, the God of growth. The temple attracts pilgrims from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and from various parts of the country and the world. The temple is open for worship only 8 during the days of Mandalapooja in November-December, Makara Sankranti on January 14 and Maha Vishuva Sankranti on April 14, and the first five days of each Malayalam month.

Sabarimalai is an ancient temple. It was mostly unreachable for about three centuries after its installation. In the 12th century, a prince of Pandalam Dynasty, Manikandan, rediscovered the original path to reach Sabarimalai. He had many followers with him, including the descendants of the Vavar (a Muslim warrior whom Manikandan defeated) family. This Prince is considered an Avatar of Ayyappa. It is believed that he meditated at Sabarimalai temple and became one with the divine. The pilgrims of Sabarimalai have to reach the temple through difficult treks in the forest as the

vehicles cannot reach there. The pilgrims have to observe celibacy for 41 days before going to Sabarimalai. They are also required to strictly follow a lacto-vegetarian diet, refrain from alcohol, not use any profanity and allow the hair and nails to grow without cutting. They are expected to bath twice in a day and visit the local temples regularly. They wear black or blue clothes, do not shave until the completion of the pilgrimage, and smear vibhuti or sandal paste on their forehead.

The ban on women entering the temple premises is being practised for centuries, as devotees consider Lord Ayyappa, the presiding deity of the temple, to be celibate. In 1991, the Kerala High Court restricted entry of women above the age of 10 and below the age of 50 from Sabarimalai temple as they were of the menstruating age. 27 years later on September 28, 2018, the Supreme Court lifted the ban, saying that discrimination against women on any grounds, even religious is unconstitutional. Temple's head priest, , said they were "disappointed" by the court order but accepted it .

Ayyappan, also called Sartavu or Sasta, in Hinduism, a deity who is always celibate, generally depicted in a yogic posture, with a bell around his neck. His most-prominent shrine is at Sabarimalai, in the southern Indian state of Kerala, where he is most popular, though the neighbouring states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka also house many Ayyappan temples. Ayyappan may bear a historical relationship to the tutelary deity Aiyanar of Tamil Nadu. The most-public aspect of the worship of Ayyappan is the annual pilgrimage to Sabarimalai, in which only men, preadolescent girls, and postmenopausal women are allowed to participate.

Prior to the journey, pilgrims are required to observe strict vows of celibacy and abstain from meat and intoxicants for a period of, traditionally, 41 days.

Pilgrims climb barefoot to the hilltop where the shrine is located, and during the pilgrimage linguistic and economic differences among participants are minimized. A late Sanskrit text describes Ayyappan as the son of Shiva and Vishnu (with the latter in his form as the enchantress Mohini). Abandoned by his parents with but a bell around his neck, he was adopted by a Pantalam king of Kerala, and, soon after, his divinity was recognized and a shrine erected to him. Other tales and songs in Malayalam and Kodagu describe his adoption by a local king. They focus on his later life, in which he grew to be a renowned warrior who first set out to defeat and was subsequently worshipped by the Muslim chieftain Vavar (to whom there is a shrine en route to Sabarimalai).

Lord Kartikeya, also popularly known as Murugan and Skanda, is a Hindu god of war. He is the eldest son of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati and the brother of Lord Ganesha. Lord Murugan is the king of the gods and is one of the greatest warriors among the gods. His worship is popular in South India compared to North India. Skanda Purana is an important Hindu text that is dedicated to him.

Tarakasura was a demon who practiced severe penance and propitiated Lord Brahma. When Lord Brahma expressed his inability to grant him a wish for immortality, he wished that only a son of Lord Shiva could kill him. Lord Brahma granted him the wish. After receiving the boon, Tarakasura thought that he had become immortal because Lord Shiva had denounced the world and engaged in deep meditation after the death of his first wife, Goddess Sati. Therefore, it was highly unlikely that he would marry and produce a son. Hence, he started torturing gods and common people.

When their husbands came to know about it, they drove them out of their homes and cursed them. They became the constellations of Krittikas, moving in the sky. At that time, all of them became distressed due to their deviation from chastity and aborted Lord Shiva's semen on top of the Himalayas, which flowed into the river Ganges. It finally developed into a child with six faces on the bank of the Ganges.

All the gods rejoiced at the birth of Lord Shiva's son, made him the chief of their army, and prepared to attack Tarakasura. Tarakasura and his army came out of Patala Loka and the war began initially, a fierce battle between Tarakasura and Virbhadra began. When Virbhadra was about to pierce Tarakasura with his trident, Lord Kartikeya stopped him. Then the battle between Kartikeya and Tarakasura began. Tarakasura hurled a divine weapon toward Kartikeya that made him unconscious for some time, but he regained the consciousness and started fighting again. After a long fierce battle, Kartikeya cut off the head of Tarakasura. All the gods and sages hailed Kartikeya.

The above two stories narrate the history of two Hindu gods from their birth. The purpose of narrating these stories to children is not only to engage their inquisitive mind but also to inculcate higher virtues in the heart of the children from a very tender age. Delivering lectures on moral or strict instructions of morality to children can never be expected to fetch desired results. Nature has perfectly designed the growth of human beings in such a way that in childhood man desires to listen to stories which unfolds a new world of fantasy, adventure, magic and miracles; gods and demons; and happiness and sorrow. Stories are happily received by children at the very tender age of two and hence inculcating values right from childhood is made possible by stories. Any value thought through stories are easily understandable to the child and its values are naturally induced in the psyche of the child.

The two stories discussed in the work consists of many values that are very essential for men to inherit in life. The valour of Ayyappa and Karthikeya are not only interesting for children but also it teaches, valour is inevitable to win over the evil in life. It also makes them understand how winning over evil helps to re-establishes peaceful and secured life. The love, respect and loyalty of Ayyappa and Karthikeya for their family and community is a valuable lesson for children. The story of Ayyappa teaches religious equality and tolerance with the character of Vavar, who belongs to Musilim community. The love and respect of Vavar towards Ayyappa, makes him a true comrade and devotee of Ayyappa and still worshipped by Hindu devotees of Ayyappa. So, apart from values to individuals, leadership qualities like valour, responsibility, religious tolerance, equality, love and respect for others are enforced into the heart and soul of the child.

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